

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **The Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica**



**2007 - 2008**

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# LEADERSHIP

## Board of Directors

	<u>2007-08</u>	<u>2008-09</u>
President	Ron Crane	Ron Crane
Vice President	Bronwen Jones	Bronwen Jones
Vice President	Peter Van Den Beemt	Melanie Sharp
Secretary	Dayla McDonald	Sandra Trutt
Treasurer	Rebecca Crawford	Gene Balas
Past President	Charles Haskell	Charles Haskell
Member at Large	Kathy Cook	Susan Bickford
Member at Large	Sanjeev Jain	Kathy Cook
Member at Large	Phyllis Kory	Phyllis Kory
Member at Large	Beth Rendeiro	Beth Rendeiro
Member at Large	Ren Renshaw	Ren Renshaw
Member at Large	Melanie Sharp	Marsha Smith

## Staff

Minister	Rev. Judith Meyer
Minister Emeritus	Rev. Ernie Pipes
Affiliate Minister	Rev. Silvio Nardoni
Director of Religious Exploration	Catherine Farmer
Administrator	Melinda Ewen
Finance Assistant	Holly Nguyen (start Oct 07)
Office-RE Assistant	Rima Snyder (start Jan 08)
Office-RE Assistant	Carmen Haley (Until Dec 07)
Office assistant	Chuck Craig (July to Oct 07)
Director of Music	Steve Wight
Organist – Pianist	Louis Durra
Weekday Sexton	Kevin Roller
Sunday Sexton	Michael Gober
Sunday Sexton	David Gladney

## Nominating Committee

<u>2007 - 08</u>	<u>2008-09</u>
Carol Agate	Rob Briner
Rob Briner	Liza Cranis
Liza Cranis	Cathie Gentile
S. J. Guidotti , Chair	Dayla McDonald
Victor Paddock	Karen Patch
Karen Patch	Pam Teplitz

## MEMBERSHIP

To become a member of the Church a person shall:

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

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

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

A "Friend" is a person who is not a member, but has made a pledge of financial support, or has made a contribution of at least \$100, during the preceding 12 months.

## Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA)

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



## ANNUAL MEETING REPORTS

### Report from the Minister: The Rev. Judith Meyer As delivered at the Annual Meeting: May 18, 2008

This is my final annual report to you, my congregation. My years as a parish minister come to a close with my retirement at the end of August. I can't help but feel the loss already; even as I look forward to the changes my life holds. I shall always be grateful for the privilege of serving you these fifteen years.

Tallying my activities to prepare this report, I note that I have officiated at twelve memorial services this year – more than usual. They were mostly for church members, but included a neighbor, the son of a member, a friend of a member, and two clients of OPCC. Grief has been a steady presence in my ministry all year.

I have also officiated at five weddings and one child dedication, with several weddings and dedications scheduled for the next three months. I hope to officiate at our very first legal California same sex wedding before I leave. Perhaps more than one.

Ministry is a collaborative activity. Our staff is talented, experienced, caring, and committed to our church. Every single one. My ministry has grown stronger and our organization has become more effective at serving members because of their work.

Ernie Pipes, our minister emeritus, and I have shared ministry as well. With Ernie as on-call back-up, I have always had help – and a wonderful relationship that I cherish. Ernie continues to serve our congregation in so many ways; we still need him.

I have had the joy of sharing leadership with Ron Crane, our President. His astute insights, compassion, sense of humor, and dedication to our church have been an inspiration and a comfort to me. He and "first spouse" John Fels deserve all our gratitude for what they contribute: the time, energy and guacamole that make our church an even better place to be.

I thank two volunteers who have made unique contributions this past year: Marsha Smith, who gave much more than one day a week to our membership program. We need her – or someone like her – every year. And Ofelia Lachtman, who stepped down in January after supporting our monthly Newcomer Orientation meetings for fourteen years. I thought I couldn't do it without her and I couldn't, until Marsha took over.

Preparing for Sunday services is a big part of the minister's job. But when the minister is out of the pulpit, a group of able volunteers, Sue Bickford, Kathy Cook, Tom Hamilton, Vilma Ortiz, and Judith Martin-Straw,

recruits interesting guests to bring alternative views and experiences to the congregation. They also have given me advice that I've needed to hear.

I have worked closely with our Committee on Ministry, Karen Payne, Victor Paddock, and Ren Renshaw. They have taken seriously the task of providing an annual review of the ministry to our Personnel Committee and Board. They have consulted with and listened to many of you. They have given me wise direction on sensitive issues.

I have participated in the larger Unitarian Universalist community as co-chair of the Fund for Unitarian Universalism, a grant-making panel funded by the Veatch Program. We give away nearly \$250,000 every year to innovative proposals to grow and extend our faith. I will continue with this work in my retirement. I also plan to remain involved with OPCC and the movement led by CLUE, Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice.

I read now the names of members and former members of our church who have died in the past year. With each name is a lifetime of remembrances and gratitude for the time they were among us. Will you please now rise (as you are able) in their honor.

Members:

Helen Burns

Sigrid Davison

Wallace Giffen

James McElmell

Former members:

Dorothy Boothe

Vicki Dolnick

May the spirit of these companions live on in us, as we carry forward our common commitment to a Unitarian Universalist way of life faithful to the words of our covenant:

Love is the doctrine of this church. So be it.



## Report of the President, Ron Crane

As delivered at the Annual Meeting: May 18, 2008

The past year has been an interesting time filled with challenges and joys.

Judith announced her retirement setting us on a course of sorrow, self-evaluation and the search for a settled minister. The Interim Minister Search Committee has provided us with a highly qualified and experienced Interim Minister in Roberta Haskin. She will provide ministry and guidance for the next two years, beginning on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

The Interim Ministry period allows us to appreciate and process the fifteen years of ministry we have enjoyed with Judith. It allows us to examine what we are and what we wish to become. It is not a small effort, but with the active participation of our membership, a goal will be realized. What does it mean to be a UU? How do we give that answer meaning? Who will be our Settled Minister to support and challenge us in the coming decades?

The New Building Program has been faced with the limitation of an economy that requires that we curtail the scope of our building dream in order to meet fiscal realities while meeting aesthetic and program needs of our community. We have twice reorganized the New Building Committee as we move from planning and conceptualization to community input and construction. The Cottage is finished. Landscaping and the new courtyard have begun. Forbes awaits its refurbishing.

We have reorganized our administration to accommodate the loss of Warren Mathews. We have institutionalized our policies and procedures to allow for the support and function of our programs and community. Melinda brings to us experience, knowledge and effectiveness.

The music program has continued to grow with the gifts and talents of Steve and Louis. The Music Committee delivers pleasure for all. Just listen!

Catherine Farmer and the RE council continue the development of programs germane to the needs of youth in a profoundly changing culture. Beth Rendeiro and the OWL program has truly become "Lifespan" with educational opportunities covering childhood thru adulthood. We have become a model for sexual and relationship education.

Sandra Trutt and the Green Committee has taken the environmental program from a concept to an actuality. We have received honors for our Green Sanctuary efforts. We continue to learn and practice what it

means to be responsible participants in a world challenged by human effects on the environment of our endangered world.

Faith in Action under Cathy Gentile's direction continues to provide personal action possibilities for carrying out our UU commitments for making the world a better place. Enjoying the success of years of support for marriage equality we will celebrate the marriages of many of our Gay and Lesbian community this summer. The history of our Sanctuary movement and the continued attention to matters local and global attest to UCCSM's commitment to social awareness and social action.

The Membership and Leadership Committee under the astute direction of Laurel Bleak and Marsha Smith has established a strong model for not only welcoming new members, but also better retention and involvement of those members as they become part of our community. Pat Gomez will be the new chairperson of the M&L Committee as Marsha and Laurel focus on new members. It's time we let the potential UU's out there know that we exist as a viable community.

The coming year invites us to participate not only in the richness of our ongoing programs, but the exploration and enrichment of our mission.

How do we expand our internet presence to prepare for the future of virtual reality and explosive internet communication?

How do we transition within the challenges of our physical structure during construction?

How do we accept and explore the greater world as we nurture and tend to our selves?

I believe we are in for another interesting year.



**MINUTES OF THE MAY 18, 2008 ANNUAL MEETING**  
(To be approved at 2009 Annual Meeting)

Note: **Meeting packet** with attachments were made available to all in attendance. Items included:

1. Agenda
2. Rules of the meeting
3. Minutes of 2007 Annual Meeting
4. Minutes: 2-10-08 Special Congregational Meeting
5. Financial Report year-to-date April 2008
6. Current accounts Balance Sheet 4-30-08
7. Proposed Budget for 2008-2009
8. Reports of Major Committees
9. Ballot for Board of Directors and Nominating Committee
10. Building Program Budget report

**Call to order and determination of quorum**

91 members were present, attaining the quorum of 69 members needed to convene.  
Ron Crane called the meeting to order at 12:48 p.m.

**Appointments**

Inspector of Elections: Sue Bickford  
Ballot/Hand Counters: Bronwen Jones, Rob Briner,  
Peter Van Den Beemt  
Timekeeper: John Fels  
Parliamentarian: Carol Agate

**Adoption of the rules of the meeting**

MOTION: To adopt the rules of the meeting as described in the meeting packet. Moved by Charles Haskell, seconded by Warren Mathews. Passed. (Attachment 2)

**Approval of the minutes**

MOTION: To approve the minutes of May 20, 2007 and Feb. 10, 2008. Moved by Rebecca Crawford, seconded by Peter Van Den Beemt. Passed unanimously. (Attachments 3 and 4)

**Presentation of candidates for Board of Directors and Nominating Committee** by S.J. Guidotti

MOTION: To adopt the slate of candidates by acclamation. Moved by Carol Agate and seconded by Warren Mathews. Passed. (Attachment 9)  
Officers Elected: Ron Crane, Melanie Sharp, Gene Balas, Bronwen Jones, Sandra Trutt  
Members At Large Elected: Susan Bickford, Ren Renshaw  
Nominating Committee Elected: Cathie Gentile, Dayla McDonald, Pam Teplitz

**Minister's Report**

The Reverend Judith Meyer presented her final report.

**Treasurer's Report** was presented by Rebecca Crawford. (Attachments 5 and 6)

**Presentation and Approval of Fiscal Year 2008 - 2009 Budget** by Rebecca Crawford.

RESOLUTION: The congregation hereby approves the budget presented for the 2008-2009 fiscal year. Moved by Charles Haskell, seconded by Peter Van Den Beemt. Passed. (Attachment 7)

**Site Renovation Committee Report** (renamed from New Building Committee) was presented by Tom Hamilton and Pat Parkerton. (Attachment 10)

RESOLUTION A: The Congregation hereby approves: 1) courtyard construction, 2) landscaping the areas around the Cottage, Forbes Hall courtyards, and parkways strips along 18th Street and Arizona Avenue, 3) paving of alley parking, and 4) the preparation of plans for the remodel of Forbes Hall.

Moved by Charles Haskell, seconded by Ofelia Lachtman. Passed.

RESOLUTION B: The President and the Immediate Past President are each authorized and directed, on behalf and in the name of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica, subject to approval by the Board of Directors, to enter into such agreements as may be reasonably necessary to complete the approved work. Moved by Joyce Holman, seconded by Peter Van Den Beemt. Passed.

The **elected officers, board members and members of the nominating committee were installed** by Past President Charles Haskell.

**New Business**

RESOLUTION A: The congregation accepts the resignation of Rev. Judith Meyer as our minister, as she enters retirement. Moved by Rob Briner, seconded by Peter Van Den Beemt. Passed.

RESOLUTION B:

Whereas, Rev. Judith Meyer has served our congregation with distinction for fifteen years, and Whereas, the congregation wishes to recognize her devotion to our church and, Whereas, her creative approach to ministry, her tireless pastoral care, and her thoughtful sermons have stimulated and inspired us, Be it resolved that the honor and title of Minister Emerita should be conferred on the Reverend Judith Meyer as she retires from active ministry at the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica. Moved by Rebecca Crawford, seconded by Ofelia Lachtman. Passed.

**President's remarks** were made by Ron Crane. He noted that we are attracting younger members to our church and this is a healthy sign. He asked us to be open to sharing with others with the ability to be influenced.

**Interim Minister Committee** Bronwen Jones introduced the members of the Interim Minister Committee, herself, Rob Briner, Kathy Cook, Beth Rendeiro and Beverly Alison. She gave background information on Rev. Roberta Haskin, our newly selected Interim Minister. Rev. Haskin will begin her term on Sept. 1, 2008.

**Member's comments**

Katie Malich shared that she is tithing 10% of the Bush Stimulus tax refund to UUCSM and 10% to the YRUU Boston trip.

Cathie Gentile thanked Judith Meyer for her support of the Faith in Action Commission.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
Sandra Trutt, Secretary

## FINANCIAL REPORTS

### Treasurer's Report Rebecca Crawford

#### A Year of Transition

This is the first year in four decades when we have not had the vital involvement of Warren Mathews on our Finance Committee. Thanks to Warren and Melinda Ewen, our Director of Administration, working hard to transition the books from Church Windows to Quick Books, the budget has been streamlined and more computerized. These changes have made my position as Treasurer and Finance Chair much easier than it might have been.

The role of the Finance Committee has been the following:

1. To develop the annual operating budget.
2. To oversee the church's financial policies and to recommend changes as needed, including acting on major budget deviation requests.
3. To advise the Board and the congregation on finance matters as appropriate.

Apart from development of the annual budget, the role of the Finance Committee is one largely of policy oversight and advice as the Director of Administration assumes the finance administration functions that previously fell to the Committee and the Treasurer.

With a view toward overseeing the financial policies of the church, Karen Patch, Melanie Sharp, and Rebecca Crawford conducted a financial review of procedures based on a checklist from the UUA. This trio had a couple of recommendations for better separation of incoming from outgoing money streams, but on the whole found the policies sound—with no irregularities.

#### The 2008–9 Budget

The current state of the economy and the upheavals in the entertainment industry have contributed to a tight budget for next year. We had anticipated a large (14%) increase in our pledge base beginning in 2008, partly because of widespread congregational support for the Long Range Planning Committee's "Vision Budget," and because of the support of a professional fund raiser, Jacki Weber. These did not materialize, but the response to our mid-year appeal allows us to present the proposed budget. It tries to maintain the spirit of our vision by keeping the emphasis on Religious Education and Music, but it does not include a budget line for our hoped-for part-time Coordinator for Congregational Life. The budget utilizes some of our accumulated savings—but less than it did last year. The theory is that over a short number of years, the improvements in congregational support will cause an increase in giving to cover the costs.

Members of the Finance Committee this year have been Carol Agate, Alan Brunell, Gene Balas and Steven DePaul. Other members have been Ron Crane (Board President), Ed Field (Investment), Jacki Weber (ex-officio member for Stewardship), and Melinda Ewen (regular staff attendee).

### Stewardship Committee Submitted by Jacki Weber

In FY '07/'08, we continued the work of expressing our congregational health through encouraging all members to annually consider their individual commitments to the church via a pledge drive. We also continued the encouragement of the idea of "five years, five percent" – that once you've been at the church for five years, 5% of your income is a healthy amount to be giving to support a congregation that helps you become the best person you can be and that demonstrates a commitment to help in the transformation of the community at large to be more just, compassionate, and environmentally aware.

We achieved more than 50% participation in the pledge drive, a continuation in the right direction. We fundraised to support a Vision Budget and met with dozens of church members one-on-one and in small groups to have a dialogue about how we want to manifest our vision for this church (and the budget impact of that manifestation). Thanks to an incredible group of committed budget drive volunteers: Phil Bonacich, Ron Crane, Sanjeev Jain, Phyllis Kory, Ofelia Lachtman, Carlos Morales, Jacki Paddock, Rhonda Peacock, Marsha Smith, Amy Thiel and Patricia Wright.

While we were unable to raise the additional \$50,000 we sought to fund expansion of Religious Exploration, Music and other programs, we consider the 2008 pledge drive a success.

Jacki Weber stepped down as the leader of the Stewardship Committee and Phil Bonacich gracefully took her place. Other members of the official committee include Ron Crane, Sanjeev Jain, and Patricia Wright. We meet regularly as a committee, and seek dialogue with all members of the congregation.

### Capital Campaign Committee Submitted by Ron Crane, Co-Chair

The Capital Campaign has not attempted a third Major Capital Campaign. Instead we have focused on collecting the remaining pledges due and encouraging gifts and bequests to help complete our current building program.

We have received an additional one-hundred and fifty thousand dollars during 07-08.

Your past and continued support is essential to the completion of our almost fifteen-year-old building program. Everyone knows that adolescence is fraught with vibrant emotion. However, few of us expect another venture into that experience.

Thank you all for your support and participation.



## Operating Statement for Fiscal Year 2007-2008

Note: deposit & minister insurance corrections made after July 08 Board meeting

### Year-end Financial Report 6-30-08

	Actuals ytd	Annual Budget	\$ Over Budget
<b>Income</b>			
Facility Use Fees	23,858	28,000	-4,142
Fundraising	27,401	30,800	-3,399
Invest Earns Alloc to Income	24,040	24,303	-263
Non-pledge Contributions	46,545	31,750	14,795
Pledge Receipts	420,517	442,000	-21,483
Savings Allocated to Income	32,000	32,000	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>574,361</b>	<b>588,853</b>	<b>-14,492</b>
<b>Expense</b>			
Office & Administration	23,950	26,520	-2,570
<b>Personnel Expense</b>			
<b>Admin Dept Employees</b>			
Administrator	71,221	71,712	-491
Finance Asst	35,302	36,747	-1,445
Maintenance Personnel	23,354	23,650	-296
Office & RE Assistant	15,125	16,060	-935
<b>Minister</b>	124,642	126,007	-1,365
<b>Music Dept Employees</b>			
Choir Section Ldr Soprano	3,700	3,700	0
Choir Section Ldr Alto	3,500	3,500	0
Choir Section Ldr Bass	0	3,500	-3,500
Choir Section Ldr Tenor	300	3,850	-3,550
Music Director	21,185	21,185	0
Organist	17,057	17,057	0
<b>Payroll Expenses</b>	22,038	22,215	-177
<b>RE Department Employees</b>			
Child Care Employees	5,424	5,300	124
Director RE	58,712	58,794	-82
Preschool Teacher	1,364	4,000	-2,636
<b>Total Personnel Expense</b>	<b>402,925</b>	<b>417,277</b>	<b>-14,352</b>
Physical Plant	55,778	61,369	-5,591
<b>Program Expense</b>			
Board of Directors	366	500	-134
Denominational Affairs	32,626	32,632	-6
Faith in Action	355	900	-545
Membership & Leadership	3,005	3,000	5
Ministry	15,041	17,905	-2,864
Music	6,600	7,200	-600
RE Child & Youth	8,308	8,750	-442
Stewardship	13,201	12,800	401
<b>Total Program Expense</b>	<b>79,503</b>	<b>83,687</b>	<b>-4,184</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>562,156</b>	<b>588,853</b>	<b>-26,697</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>12,205</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12,205</b>

## CURRENT ACCOUNTS BALANCE SHEET

Note: deposit & minister insurance corrections made after July 08 Board meeting

### CURRENT ASSETS

Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Bank of America	15,621
Merrill Lynch CD's	1,486,000
Merrill Lynch EMA Acct	335,478
Petty Cash	150
Interest receivable	18,976
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>1,856,224</b>

### RESERVES, FUNDS & LIABILITIES

Reserves	
Emergency Reserves	204,000
Minister Equity-Sharing Reserve	199,528
Operating Cushion	40,000
Unrestricted Savings	77,957
Fiscal Year Surplus	12,205
Funds	
New Building Project Fund	1,238,316
Pipes Lecture Fund	36,594
Will Wright Pulpit Endowment Fund	15,752
Women's Alliance Fund	2,517
Administration Funds	
Book Store Fund	2,742
de Benneville Pines Weekend	416
Deferred Projects	4,500
Unemployment Compensation	1,497
Faith in Action Projects	
10,000 Villages Products Fund	30
FIA Commission Fund	386
Green Products Fund	26
Hunger Fund	1,575
Interweave Fund	199
Peace Committee Fund	4
Robert Burke Fund	91
UUSC Products Fund	105
Ministry Funds	
Discretionary Fund	24
Sabbatical Expense Fund	10,400
Retirement Commemoration Fund	5,455
Music Dept Fund	162
RE Projects	
Guest at your table	20
RE Dept Fund	46
RE Equipment Fund	-121
RE Youth Activities Fund	1,647
UUUNO Scholarship Fund	0
YRUU camping	77
Liabilities	
Payroll Liabilities	76
<b>TOTAL RESERVES, FUNDS &amp; LIABILITIES</b>	<b>1,856,224</b>

# Approved Budget 2008-2009

**Notes: salaries include \$10,000 bulk appropriation approved at Annual Meeting, as apportioned by Board**

Income			
1	Facility Use Fees	25,000	Forbes and Art Wall 6 mo. use
2	Fundraising	30,550	D4\$ + \$3,700 additional fund raiser
3	Invest Earnings Alloc to Income	15,400	assumes 3% investment return
4	Non-pledge contributions	32,726	
5	Pledge receipts	420,000	
6	Savings allocated to income	29,341	
7	<b>Total income</b>	<b>553,017</b>	
Expense			
	Spiritual Life & Programs		NOTE: corrected per UUMA guidelines
	Ministry		2 mo Judith; 10 mo Interim
8	Minister	112,691	interim: salary+housing = \$80K + benefits
9	Ministerial support	12,050	generous cong, guest speakers, no sabbatical
10	Adult RE	700	
	Music Program		
11	Music Director	22,293	
12	Organist	18,904	
13	Choir section leaders	11,943	no bass section leader
14	Guest musicians	6,000	includes substitute organists
15	Maintenance and Supplies	700	
	Religious Exploration		
16	Director of RE	59,407	
17	Preschool teacher	4,000	
18	Childcare employees	5,392	
19	Office & RE asst. (split)	8,572	includes pension starting January
20	Materials, training & support	7,100	
	Sustaining programs		
21	Board of directors	0	line item eliminated
22	Denominational affairs	24,411	75% of fair share for UUA and PSWD
23	Faith in Action	900	speakers; Multiracial Development
24	Membership and leadership	2,800	coffee hour, new member events
25	Stewardship	800	no development consultant
26	<b>Total program expense</b>	<b>298,663</b>	
	Administrative infrastructure		
27	Administrator	75,281	52 weeks rather than 50 wks
28	Finance Asst	40,238	pension 12 mo
29	Office & RE asst. (split)	8,572	includes pension starting January
30	Supplies, Equipment, & Support	26,800	incl. \$1,500 bank service charges
31	Payroll expenses	24,283	employer payroll taxes
	Physical infrastructure		
33	Equipment & maintenance	8,800	50% + reduction
34	Facility operation	45,854	utilities, insurance, parking attendant
35	Maintenance personnel	24,526	sextons, cleaning staff
36	<b>Total infrastructure expense</b>	<b>254,354</b>	
37	<b>Total expense</b>	<b>553,017</b>	
38	<b>Total income (from above)</b>	<b>553,017</b>	
39	<b>Net</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>balanced</b>

**MINISTRY**  
**Committee on Ministry**  
**Submitted by Karen Payne**

The Committee on Ministry remained stable in its three-person membership this past year: Victor Paddock, Karen Payne, and Ren Renshaw. The mission of the committee is to ascertain from both the congregation and the minister thoughts and impressions as to how effective the church has been in meeting its goals and directives. The committee met four times with the minister, Judith Meyer, to discuss these issues. Because we had surveyed the general congregation last year, it was decided that this year's focus for the committee would be to examine Reverend Meyer's interaction with a number of key committee chairs and members of the Board of Directors. In addition, Judith requested that the committee begin to research pastoral care programs in other UU churches around the country, with the possibility of developing such a program for our church, as a means of addressing the growing need and demand for reaching out to church members.

The Committee interviewed eighteen individuals; either committee chairs or Board members to address the question of the minister's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the congregation and these key church members. These individuals were asked questions regarding their satisfaction serving on their respective committees/board, expectations for their roles, Judith's role vis a vis their committee, and any thoughts for improvement. The Committee reported that feedback was overwhelmingly positive from the majority of individuals interviewed. Areas of concern, namely the stress of balancing personal demands with the demands of their church commitment and the challenge of working through the transition of changing leaders within a committee were discussed with Judith. Ways in which she could support committee chairs and board members were brainstormed.

With regard to researching pastoral care programs, the Committee did contact a number of UU churches across the country and spoke with the individuals responsible for developing and running the pastoral care programs there. Judith supports the idea of continuing to look at this as a possibility for our church in the future. We began what would be an ongoing process of exploring possibilities and discovering what would be appropriate for our church members. It is a program that Judith strongly supports as a means of further meeting the growing needs of our congregation.

**Adult Religious Exploration Committee**  
**Submitted by Emmy Cresciman, Chair**

The '07-'08 church year was a busy one for us with a variety of program offerings to show for it. Ernie Pipes helped us to explore sustainable pathways to happiness. Lu Ann Darling shared her expertise in a workshop based on her book *Discover Your Mentoring Mosaic, a Guide to Enhanced Mentoring*. Joe Engleman gave us insight into socially responsible investing. Judith Meyer explored the early history of Unitarianism and Universalism in America.

A varied and fascinating group met twice a month to pursue writing as a spiritual quest for women. Nicole and Leon Henderson-MacLennan explored grief in all its guises.

Deborah Fuller facilitated the popular U-U curriculum "Building Your Own Theology I" and she and Bernie Silvers each led sections of the BYOT Ethics curriculum, as well. We collaborated with other groups in the church to present "Soul Work" and "Unplug the Christmas Machine."

As the year drew to a close, the committee began the process of reinventing its mission in light of the impact of Judith's retirement. Because she has worked so closely with all of us on the committee over the past couple of years, we (like so many others in our congregation) have a hard time imagining what the future will bring, but we look forward to working with our interim minister through the period of transition. And we look forward to working more closely with other groups in the church as well, to sustain, enhance, and nurture our church family as we all take part in the process of transforming our spiritual home

**Pulpit Committee**  
**Submitted by Sue Bickford, Chair**

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 work in collaboration with Judith to evaluate the services and discuss issues related to worship. The Pulpit Committee finds speakers and pulpit hosts for Sundays when Judith is not in the pulpit—one Sunday a month from September through June and for the months of July and August. The committee meets monthly between September and June.

September through June: For the one Sunday a month when Judith is not in the pulpit, we rely on guest speakers and intergenerational services that are put together by RE. We were pleased with the successful inter-generational services on at least two occasions this year, the Day of the Dead service and the fabulous Winter Holiday Pageant. 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. Occasionally, we bring community leaders to the pulpit because of the important work of their organization and it's relationship to our church. We are fortunate that we have been able to identify and bring guest speakers to the church that help us provide a consistently high quality worship service when Judith is not in the pulpit. Among these this year have been members of our own congregation who have a message to give.

Summer: We are fortunate to already have guest speakers lined up for the summer. These include Jim Conn, Silvio

Nardoni, Michael Eselun, S.J. Guidotti and Neil Comess-Daniels, and Ed Begley.

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. We have identified a need for more pulpit hosts to be trained and are in the process of actively recruiting more. We keep a script for pulpit hosts, which is updated regularly, so that they have the support they need to conduct the service.

Committee members include Vilma Ortiz, Sue Bickford, Kathy Cook, Judith Martin Straw and Tom Hamilton.

With the decision by Judith Meyer to step down as minister, the pulpit host committee has decided to remain intact to support Roberta Hastings as she requests for her time as Interim Minister.

### **Covenant Groups (Small Group Ministry) Marv Pulliam & Carol-jean Teuffel, Co- Chairs**

Three groups met twice monthly in 2008 for six months or more. One group hopes to continue to meet throughout the summer. A leadership transition period forced a hold for the Implementation Team with an eye to reconvening in the fall with the new energy of our new interim minister.

### **Interim Minister Search Committee Bronwen Jones, Chair**

The Interim Task Force was responsible for recommending a candidate for Interim Minister to the board for approval. The committee unanimously selected Rev. Roberta Haskin who was then unanimously approved by the board. Roberta will be coming to Santa Monica, beginning her ministry with us on September 1<sup>st</sup>. She will be moving here from Phoenix, Arizona, where she is concluding a one year interim. We will have Roberta to help guide us through this time of transition, after we say goodbye to Judith, and while we search for a new settled minister.

Roberta is very warm and personable, and a very attentive listener. She really has a calling for this kind of work. Before becoming a dedicated interim minister she was a UU hospital chaplain. Earlier she was a DRE for the Catholic Church in which she was raised, and later in UU churches after she became a UU twenty years ago.

We feel that she will serve us very well.

Members of the Interim Task Force were Beverly Alison, Rob Briner, Kathy Cook, Bronwen Jones (chair) and Beth Rendeiro.



## **RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION**

### **Report of the Director of Religious Education, Catherine Farmer**

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 60 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 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 Margot Page. Members of the Council during the year included Chris Brown, Tom Hamilton, John Murray, Karen Patch, Beth Rendeiro, and Linda Van Ligten.

Worship: This year our program focused on a select number of high quality community worship experiences for children, youth and adults in our community. For the first time this year, all of our Intergenerational and youth-led worship services included high quality musical performances by members of our church community - children and youth as well as adults - thanks to the musical direction of Bronwen Jones. We also celebrated two truly Intergenerational Sunday services during the year, our Day of the Dead service in October, and a more intentionally worshipful RE Sunday service on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

In addition to supporting these worship opportunities, my work in this area also included involvement in the sanctuary, at least once per month, preparing and sharing stories and celebrations such as introducing Guest At Your Table, providing support for the "Holiday Revels" pageant in December, leading the Bridging Ceremony recognizing our graduating high school seniors, etc. as well as providing support for our two youth-led Sunday services, YRUU Sunday and Coming of Age Sunday.

Classroom: The first, second and third Sundays of the month are Classroom Sundays for all ages. At each service we offer Preschool, Kindergarten-2<sup>nd</sup> grade (Spirit Play), 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade (Tapestry of Faith), 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grade (Neighboring Faiths) classes, and our YRUU program for 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades. Our 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Coming of Age program meets during the 9:00 service only. Overall, our classes have gone very well this year, thanks to the many dedicated volunteers serving as teachers in our program.

There were a number of new elements in our classroom program this year that are important to note. As of January 2008, our preschool, elementary and high school classes moved into our beautiful newly renovated cottage. The effect on our classes of being in bright, clean, welcoming space cannot be overestimated! Concurrently with the

move to the cottage, our Kindergarten-2<sup>nd</sup> grade class began a new program model called Spirit Play, which has been given high praise by children, parents and teachers. The Spirit Play model is structured around engaging children in stories that are foundational to our faith as Unitarian Universalists and as members of our own UCCSM church community. We also started using the brand new Tapestry of Faith curricula put out by the UU Association for our 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade class; "Moral Tales" was used January-May, and we'll be offering "Toolbox of Faith" in Fall 2008.

We also hired, for the first time this year, a Preschool RE Teacher to lead our preschool classes at each service, and could not be more pleased with Wendy Wegner, who has been with us since February 2008. Under Wendy's leadership our preschool program is the strongest it has ever been; it makes a huge difference for young children to have the same person working with them every week, and Wendy is warm and welcoming to children and parents and highly skilled at engaging the kids in the lesson theme each week.

Social Justice: This year, the elementary RE program engaged in special Social Justice projects on the fourth Sunday of most months. Highlights of the year were our two off-site projects, our trip to Turning Point shelter in March, and our participation in LA's annual Big Sunday project, helping plant a garden at the VA Hospital in May.

Coming of Age: This year's COA program was a great success, with nine 8<sup>th</sup> graders – Colette Fletcher-Hoppe, Jessie Geoffray, Madeleine Hero, Angelica Jue, Rachel Moore, and Elizabeth Saldo - who worked 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 18<sup>th</sup>. The program's success is due to the dedication of our COA leaders, Ian Dodd, Karl Lisovsky, and Marcy Muray, and the support of the church members who signed on to serve as mentors to each of the youth: Beverly Alison, Sue Bickford, Teri Bond, Karen Canady, Cindee Hallinan, Scott Johnson, Bronwen Jones, Margot Page, Beth Rendeiro, Dorothy Steinicke, and Jennifer Westbay.

Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU): This year was the third year that we have offered Senior High programming at 9:00 and 11:00! This year we found, believe it or not, that our 9:00 program was much more highly attended than the 11:00, something that we hope will even out as this year's COA students join YRUU in the fall of 2008. Over the past couple of years we have seen the size of our program more than double, and our senior high population will approach 40 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 our teens, thanks to the leadership of the youth themselves as well as that of our YRUU advisors. We are committed to providing a high quality program for high schoolers at both of our Sunday services, and have been able to do so this year through the extraordinary dedication of our youth advisors Chris Brown and Liza Cranis, Sarah Gaillot, Gretchen Goetz, Cindee Hallinan, Tom Kafka, and Karen Patch.

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, we offered Kindergarten-1<sup>st</sup> Grade OWL, taught by Cynthia Cottam, Tom Early, Beth Rendeiro, and Linda Van Ligten, and 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Grade OWL, taught by Kathy Cook, Carl Hoppe, Marv Pulliam, and Linda Van Ligten. Both of these classes call for a special commitment of time from teachers, students and their families. Next year, we will offer the Jr. High (8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade) and Sr. High (10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade) OWL classes.

Communication/Networking: Included weekly RE Updates email to RE families and church leaders, 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.

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

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 fifth 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 am eager to see what the next year will bring us, as we move into a new phase of our church's life, with our new Interim Minister and the construction of the next phase of our building plans. It has been a joy to work with all of you; I thank you for the opportunity to serve as your DRE, and look forward to what we will accomplish together for many years to come!

### **Religious Exploration Council Submitted by Margot Page, Chair**

#### Recognition of the Volunteers in the RE Council:

Council members for the 2007-2008 year were Catherine Farmer and seven volunteers, Beth Rendeiro, Tom Hamilton, Karen Patch, Linda Van Ligten, John Murray, Chris Brown, and Margot Page, chair.

#### Accomplishments of the Past Year:

Preschool staffing - This year for the first time, our preschool RE classes are led by a paid staff member. This gives our program consistency from week to week, which is very important for preschoolers, as well as the benefit of leadership from a very experienced and enthusiastic teacher. Wendy Wegner joined our staff in February, and parents have been raving about her! This is a big step forward in the welcome we provide the youngest members of our community.

RE Teacher Training - We hosted a one-day training in September for new and returning teachers.

The RE Parent Orientation and Potluck was a fall fun filled evening making connections.

RE Participation in Social Justice - SJ Project in November was making dog biscuits to donate to an animal shelter; SJ trip in February for the K-5th grade classes to Turning Point transitional housing to meet with the residents and prepare sack lunches; SJ trip in May was to the VA Hospital where the children helped plant a garden as their participation in the city wide day of help - Big Sunday; four youth and one advisor attended the UU-United Nations Office Spring Seminar in New York in April, the topic was "Picking Up the Pieces: Building a Culture of Peace."

Special Events - Day of the Dead Intergenerational Service, Winter Holiday Pageant, Secret Pals Program, Easter Celebration Sunday, YRUU Sunday, Coming of Age Sunday, and RE Sunday.

Vibrant and Growing Youth Program -with an advisor team of seven this year, participation in the UU-UNO Spring Seminar, leading the YRUU Sunday in March, social events, and preparing for the upcoming UU Heritage Trip to Boston; 11 youth will attend.

Connection with the Adult RE Committee and the Green Sanctuary Committee - Together we offered the Holiday Craft Party and concurrent "Unplug the Christmas Machine" parent workshop on Dec. 1st.

New Curriculum: Spirit Play - Starting in January we began a brand new program model for our K-2nd classes. It is the Unitarian Universalist adaptation of the Godly Play and Montessori Methods, developed by Nita Penfold, D. Min. It is organized around sharing foundational stories with our children in a program model designed to present core stories, help children make meaning and wonder through art, create a spiritual community of children, support multiple learning styles, and create a strong UU identity. So far the feedback from parents, teachers and participants has been very positive.

The Tapestry Program being used in the 3-5th classes is working well and all seem to be enjoying that experience.

Transition to the Cottage: As of January, our preschool, K-2nd, 3rd-5th, and high school classes began meeting in the newly refurbished cottage. It is a beautiful and welcoming space for our children and youth. We are eagerly looking forward to having the landscape done.

OWL: - Our Whole Lives - Under the guidance of Beth Rendeiro, the OWL program continues to be a vital part of our program. This year we offered 5th-6th grade OWL with 14 participants and the K-1 OWL with 8 participants.

The RE Council is pleased that all pieces of our program are in place and working well. Our goal is to keep our growing program vital during the upcoming congregational transition.



## MUSIC PROGRAM

### Report of the Director of Music Steve Wight

This church year (September 2007 to the present) has in some ways been a trying one for the music department. After the congregation graciously - and, I believe, wisely - gave their ok to expand our paid singers to include one in each section, we were unable to fill either the Tenor or Bass Section Leader position due primarily to the low level of musicianship of those who applied. Certainly this was in part due to the amount of money we had to spend, but the overall level of talent and musicianship should have been considerably higher. As a result, we struggled through the year with no leaders in those sections, and with our tenor section often consisting of only one person. This of course puts most of the standard repertoire out of our reach, and makes music making of any kind a real challenge.

In addition Wally Giffen, one of our most experienced singers, died midway through our season. We were very fortunate to have Joe Hardin return for most of the ensuing months of our choir season to round out our tenor section.

One real highlight of our year has been the addition of Alto Section Leader Tiffany Carmel, who has proven to be a solid professional and a very positive influence on the personal level. With both Tiffany and longtime Soprano Section Leader Michelle McWilliams, our women's sections have had solid leadership.

As always, Louis Durra has given time and talent far beyond his job description, arranging music, accompanying singers and instrumentalists across a wide array of styles, leading a very successful and well-attended jazz concert series, and helping to shape each Sundays experience in church into something special.

Because we were unable to fill two of our Section Leader positions, and we finished the year basically dead on our budget allocation in all other categories, the music department will have spent approximately \$10,000 less than was allocated to it for this fiscal year. This is good news in the short run, as it makes the overall deficit quite a bit easier to bear. In the long run, though, I believe it will be penny wise and pound foolish to scrimp on one of the church programs most often responsible for drawing new members to church - any church. I believe it is crucial to the long term health and survival of the church that, as and when it can, the congregation continue to fund the music program in a way that will allow us to make it as vital and high-level as possible.

Our plan for next year is to leave the Bass Section Leader position vacant, which will save \$3,500, a substantial portion of the overall music budget. It will continue to be a challenge to provide the best music possible under those conditions, but we have gotten by with it in the past, and our committed and eager bass section help enormously.

On a very positive note, our former Tenor Section Leader, Michael Lamb, who moved to the Bay Area a year ago, will return in the fall, which will mean we will always have at least one highly experienced, capable singer in that section.

Finally, I want to say how grateful I am to the Music Committee, under the dedicated and inspired leadership of Bronwen Jones and Rima Snyder. There is an incredible amount of work that goes into the organization and promotion of concert events, lectures, special Sunday services, and many other activities administered by this exceptional group of people. All of these activities exist with no budget, and are carried on strictly on the blood, sweat, and tears of hard-working volunteers. They greatly enrich the life both of our church and of the larger community to which the church belongs.

There are many challenges visible on the horizon for the church, not least of which is the loss of Judith Meyer, a person of spectacular gifts, rare eloquence, kindness, intelligence, compassion and wit. I pledge to continue to keep the music of the church on the highest level of which I am capable, and I invite you all to join me in making great music a reality in our church home.

### **Music Committee**

#### **Submitted by Bronwen Jones & Rima Snyder Co-Chairs**

The Music Committee presented two wonderful Stevenings - "The Great 20<sup>th</sup> Century Music Robbery" and "Gravicembalo col Piano e Forte"; four very successful Louis Durra Trio concerts; two Saturday Spotlights, and supported the choir's Dining For Dollars Event, "D4\$ Greatest Hits". Everybody who attended these events had a wonderful time.

The Music Committee also co-sponsored two special musical events featuring Moira Smiley and "LA Tapestries" featuring Nova Safo & Michelle McWilliams.

A significant development this year was the Music Committee's collaboration with RE for the Intergenerational Services. This has been something desired for a long time. There were three this year – The Day Of The Dead, The Holiday Revels, and RE Sunday. By far the most ambitious was the Holiday Revels which involved about 45 members of the congregation in both musical and non-musical activity. We all worked and performed together, providing a way for people across the generations to connect with each other, sometimes for the first time.

This year the Music Committee has received many, many compliments as to how wonderful the choir sounds. Steve Wight has done remarkable work with our choir. He arranges music specifically to accommodate the balance that is challenged by a tiny tenor section. He always works and performs with a deep connection to the music at hand. He seeks out music that ties in beautifully with the sermon so that the congregation has a full experience in the service. We all feel very fortunate that Steve is our Director of Music.

Louis Durra continues to amaze us with the breadth of musical palette. He is generous with his rehearsal time that goes way beyond the required Sunday mornings and Thursday evenings. Our youth had some special opportunities to learn from Louis this year as he polished up our efforts in the Intergenerational Services and Coming Of Age service. Louis always plays from inside the music

and also works hard to select pieces that will compliment the 9am service.

Both Louis and Steve share their huge talents with generous doses of humor.

On a sad note, the members of the Music Committee greatly miss Wally Giffen. We will share stories about him for a very long time indeed.

Special thanks to Peter Van Dem Beemt for his continuing wisdom and support, to Melissa Parkerton for organizing the receptions that follow our musical events, to Diana Spears who works with Melissa on the receptions and helps us connect to other committees in the church, to Dayla McDonald whose artwork is fabulous, to Joe Engleman for handling the door for us at Louis' concerts, to Liz Fuller who uploads our news to the website, to Norb Gallery and Kim Miller for generously sharing their professional skills with our committee and to the church as a whole, to Tom Ahern's support for the Saturday Spotlight and reception, and to Teri Bond who recently took on the task of providing PR for a Louis Durra concert. Thank you to everyone!

We invite all lovers of music to join us as we continue to make our music program thrive!

## **FAITH IN ACTION**

### **Faith in Action Commission**

#### **Submitted by Cathie Gentile, Chair**

Accomplishments of the past year: We have increased awareness and donations to Common Ground (Gerrie Lambson), Step-Up on Second, (Janet Goodwin/Ed Hession), Daybreak (Denise Helton), and Turning Point. Marsha Smith has identified volunteers to continue UCCSM's involvement in Turning Point. Kay Ward has pledged \$25 per month for Step Up. Edwin Hession has taken over coordinating the monthly dinners at Step Up for Janet Goodwin. Janet is still involved in serving, but has gladly handed over the coordinating reins to Ed. Ed deserves special recognition for his superb efforts. Rhonda Peacock is also a Step Up volunteer.

At the September 2007 Annual Issues Election the Green Sanctuary Action Plan was unanimously approved.

Although the UCCSM hosted the UULM Legislative Summit in September there is no ongoing relationship currently between the UULM and UCCSM except for a UULM's Marriage Equality work group including Carol Agate, Kris Langabeer and Jacki Paddock.

Also in September, Ann Fagan Ginger, Executive Director of the Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute and author presented panel discussion entitled "New Paths for Action" panel discussion along with Professor Antonio Brown of the ACLU.

25,000 Petition for Peace: Phyllis Gabriel and Joan Verdon circulated the Rev. William Sinkford's petition that calls for an end to the Iraq war. Rev. Sinkford sent the petitions to Capitol Hill on October 10.

UCCSM contributed funds to help sponsor the Interfaith

Call to Justice: a two-day interfaith social justice training and community strategy planning conference in November at Temple Isaiah. Faith in Action members Cathie Gentile and Sandra Trutt attended. Full details of the conference can be found at: [www.call-to-justice.org](http://www.call-to-justice.org).

Upward Bound House Senior Villa now receives donations of nonperishable food items periodically throughout the year.

New member Ron Francis has proposed a study action item on the UN Declaration of Human Rights. This action item will be more fully developed over the upcoming church year.

There were two presentations on the New Sanctuary Movement this year and what role if any UCCSM may take. This will also be more developed for the Fall meeting.

Four members of YRUU along with adult leader Liza Cranis attended the UU-UNO Spring Seminar in New York in April thanks to the ongoing support of Eleanor Eagan & FIAC.

FIAC chair is now attending Multi-Racial Development Committee meetings. There is much to share with this group. It is hoped to bring MRDC more fully under the FIAC umbrella. Decision is pending discussion by the MRDC.

Diana Spears as Chair of the Peace & Civil Liberties Group presented many films and guest speakers this past year, as summarized in a separate report.

Cathie Gentile will continue one more year as FIAC chair thanks to the offer of support by Charles & Christine Haskell as FIAC secretaries!

Volunteers: Lyn Armondo, Liza Cranis, Eleanor Eagan, Judy Federick, Ron Francis, Janet Goodwin, Phyllis Gabriel, Charles Haskell, Christine Haskell, Denise Helton, Patrick McGuire, Leslie Reuter, Diana Spears, Marguerite Spears, Sandra Trutt, Alyssa Wood, & Marge Zifferblatt. Joan Verdon resigned her involvement in FIAC.

Goals: Increase volunteer base for ongoing activities. Continue to bring guest speakers, show films and/or DVDs on topical social issues. Raise awareness and funds to continue the mission of the Faith In Action Commission: to inform and educate the congregation & public in areas of social concern.

### **Green Sanctuary Committee**

#### **Submitted by Sandra Trutt & Leslie Reuter, co-chairs**

We submitted our application for candidacy to the UU Ministry for Earth's Green Sanctuary Program in Oct. 2007. We heard back from the committee in March formally accepting us into the program. However, we were asked to re-work our Action Plan to include new environmental justice actions and to send in information lacking in our application. We will work on this and send in the requested information.

During the year we completed the following projects:

1. Assisted Alison Kendall with the Transportation Survey in Oct. '07.
2. Jim Scott presented a green concert on Oct. 26, 2007.
3. Joe Engleman presented a workshop on "Environmentally Responsible Investing" in Nov. '07.

4. Assisted Catherine Farmer and R.E. making holiday decorations with recycled materials in December '07.
5. Attended Tree People Tree Dedication Planting in Dec.
6. Provided an Organic Brunch for church members and friends March 16, 2008 after the 9 a.m. service.
7. In April sent letters to Senator Boxer and Rep. Waxman to get Global Warming legislation on S. 309 and H.R. 1590 out of committee and onto the floor for debate.
8. Held an E-Waste Collection on site as part of Big Sunday, May 3, 2008 in conjunction with California Recycles. Lloyd Drum, Catherine Gentile and Sandra Trutt assisted.
9. Kendra Henderson provided a Carbon Calculator for members to assess their carbon footprint in May '08.
10. Completed an Environment Audit brochure for congregants on things they can do to lower their personal carbon emissions. Diana Spear, Helen Brown, Robin Lowney Lankton - subcommittee.
11. Continuing to collect spent CFL's, old batteries and used print cartridges in Forbes Hall.
12. Helen Brown sells new compact fluorescent light bulbs monthly. Profits to FIA.
13. Gathering data for guidelines for green events held at church. Hildreth Simmons, Cathie Gentile, Sandra Trutt were on the subcommittee.
14. Continuing to publish articles on green issues in the newsletter and green tips in the Order of Service.

### **Interweave**

#### **Submitted by Judy Federick, Chair**

Interweave, the UU affiliate group for bisexuals, gays, lesbians and transgenders (BGLTs), and their friends and allies, is in its seventh year at UCCSM. Our issues for study and action this year continue to be marriage equality and outreach to at-risk GBLT youth.

Our activities in the past year included the following: A record 36 people marched with the Santa Monica UU contingent in the annual Gay Pride Parade on Sunday, June 10th. We wore a rainbow variety of T-shirts proclaiming the theme of the 2007 parade: Love, Equality, Pride. On the back of the shirt, we showed off our UU pride with the statement: "Unitarian Universalists/Civil Marriage Is a Civil Right." The crowd particularly loved our bevy of dancing girls, our great conga line, and the multigenerational participation of our group.

As part of our outreach to at-risk GBLT youth, we continued this year to focus our fund raising efforts on the homeless youth services program of Common Ground, the Westside HIV Community Center. Again this year, we asked our church community for donations of the items most requested by the program's homeless youth: T-shirts and jeans in March; books and art supplies in April/May; and travel-size toiletries in June. The church further demonstrated its enthusiasm by designating Common Ground Westside as the beneficiary of the Generous Congregation collection

several Sundays during the year and by the donations of several church members individually.

Our Annual All-Church Interweave Picnic, co-hosted with the Women's Alliance, was held August 12th with proceeds going to Common Ground Westside.

On October 7th, we once again hosted the Coming Out Day Service. During the service, church members --gay and straight-- talked about the events in their lives that transformed them into advocates for the civil rights of gay, bisexual, lesbian, and transgender persons. Judy Federick was pulpit host.

We are in liaison with the UU Legislative Ministry California - Marriage Equality Leadership Team in efforts to end discrimination based on sexual orientation in the realm of civil marriage rights. Volunteers from our church were sought for the "Decline to Sign" campaign in spring 2008. This was an effort to encourage people across the state to not sign the petition placing an anti-marriage initiative on the November 2008 ballot. Most likely the initiative will appear on the ballot, so the UULM is now gearing up to fight the November initiative and will be calling for our help.

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.

#### **Multiracial Development Committee Edna Bonacich, Chair**

The MRDC has been a fairly active committee this year. We took over responsibility for the Thanksgiving celebration, and presented a Kwanzaa service. Some of us attended a Santa Monica Interfaith Breakfast at Calvary Baptist Church. One of our members, Deborah Herman, has become involved in the UUA Prison Pen-Pal Program.

The Committee has undertaken several activities in connection with immigration and immigrants, which are also supported by the Faith in Action Commission. On March 30, the theme of the Sunday service was "Welcoming the Strangers among Us in Xenophobic Times," and addressed the need to develop a humanitarian approach to immigrants and immigration to counter the discrimination and hostility that has characterized the dialogue and debate on immigrants in the U.S. today. Vilma Ortiz helped to arrange the service and presided as pulpit host. The speakers were Norma Chinchilla, Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies, and Eduarda Diaz-Schwarzbach, retired professor of Chicano Studies, at California State University Long Beach, both members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Long Beach.

The MRDC, under the leadership of Nora Hamilton, has also agreed to support the project of the UUSC-Southern California Unit to raise funds for bonding out undocumented immigrants who have been rounded up by the Immigration Customs and Enforcement unit (ICE) of Homeland Security and placed in detention, involving prolonged separation from families and friends. The bond fund enables detained immigrants to return to their homes and families while

awaiting hearings. Members of the MRDC have attended conferences and submitted articles to the Newsletter on the immigration issue. The "generous congregation" collection of the March 30 Sunday services went to the immigration bond fund.

MRDC member Victor Narro is a leader in the Car Wash Campaign, engages in organizing highly exploited car wash workers. Articles have appeared in the Newsletter to keep the congregation informed about this important endeavor. The Committee hopes and expects more congregational involvement in the campaign in the coming year.

The MRDC has strengths and weaknesses. We hope to strengthen the African American aspect of our program in the coming months. We feel that more could be done to create a positive presence for UUCSM in Santa Monica's multi-ethnic community. We look forward to another productive year in 2008-9.

#### **Peace & Civil Liberties Committee Submitted by Diana Spears Co-chair**

We sponsored two programs in August 2007: the film *Blood Diamonds* about warlords enslaving people to mine diamonds to fund civil war; and *Combatants for Peace* featuring a former Israeli officer in the elite Israel Defense Force and a former Palestinian insurgent who believe peace will not be achieved through violence.

With our membership diminished we only had lightly attended meetings in September and October. In November showed the film *Waging Peace*. In January we cosponsored an event with the Office of the Americas: "The Struggle to Close the School of the Americas", hosted by Theresa and Blase Bonpane and Frank Dorrel. Also in January we hosted speaker Tad Daley who presented "Solving the Iran Crisis Without War and Envisioning the Road to Abolish War". In March Rick Rhoads led members at the Peace March of the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Iraq War. In April, committee member Arvid Knudsen, brought in speaker Said Jabbari from the Center for Promotion of Democracy & Human Rights in Iran, who gave an historical perspective of Iran from an Iranian point of view. In May we cosponsored a film with the Office of the Americas: *Leave No Soldier*.

Our members include Arvid Knudsen, Rick and Peggy Rhoads, Marge Zifferblatt, Cathie Gentile, Diana Spears and others in contact with the peace community. The group was started in the fall of 2002. We are attempting to join with other church groups here to activate the UUA Peacemaking study group in an effort to remain active.

#### **UU United Nations Program Submitted by Eleanor Eagan, Envoy**

The most rewarding part of my decades long tenure as UU/ UNO envoy began 3 or 4 years ago when I started providing seed money to send two or more students and an adult advisor to our Annual Spring Intergenerational Seminar held in our national UU/UNO headquarters. No youth from the West Coast had attended the seminar prior to 2006. Except for attendees from Canada, who have provided major support for all things UN related throughout the founding and

history of the UN, the first intergenerational seminar attracted only twenty youth, all of whom came from the East and South. The seminar has grown; this year nearly sixty youth attended coming from all over the US, Canada, Europe and Russia.

The UU/UN Office, located directly across the street from the UN, is able to provide an extraordinary learning experience for our youth by providing speakers from many areas of the UN to address the timely topic of the 2008 seminar, "Picking up the Pieces: Building a Culture of Peace." This year they were able to meet the new Executive Director of the UU/UNO, Bruce Knotts, who moderated one of the panels. Also new was hearing from Gillian Sorenson, currently Senior Advisor at the UN Foundation. She is a UU and has held various jobs previously at the UN. (On a personal note, Gillian's husband is the acclaimed Theodore Sorenson, also a UU, famous speech writer and longtime associate of the Kennedy family.)

For a full account of this year's Santa Monica group and a picture of seminar attendees read article by Liza Cranis online in the May '08 issue of the church newsletter. Liza has served as adult advisor for our group each year and has been a major force in its increasing success. Also notable has been the additional funding from many groups and individuals in the congregation including Faith in Action and Judith Meyer.

Current plans, awaiting time available to implement for both myself and R.E. Director Catherine Farmer, are to provide a preschool curriculum based on an available "Children's Rights and Responsibilities" prepared years ago by Wayne State University and key it to a widely acclaimed Aesop's Fables cartoon prepared by Lisa Sturz available on DVD. The cartoon is widely used in schools on the East Coast. Combining it with the "Children's Rights and Responsibilities" curriculum we feel is an idea whose time has come.

## **MEMBERSHIP & LEADERSHIP**

### **Membership and Leadership Committee Laurel Bleak & Marsha Smith, Co-Chairs**

Members - Farrokh Allen, Laurel Bleak (Co-Chair) Rob Briner, Kathy Cook, Catherine Farmer, Robin Lowney-Lankton, Audrey Lyness, Marsha Smith (Co-Chair), Carol-jean Teuffel, Linda Van Lighten, and with appreciated support from Marjorie Annapav, Carlos Morales, and Sandra Trutt.

The role of the Membership and Leadership (M&L) Committee is to support existing programs and develop new programs that sustain and enhance the welcoming, membership and leadership systems of the church, and to sustain a church culture in which all members can participate fully and productively.

#### Accomplishments:

1. We implemented a trial Congregational Life Coordinator position in partnership with the Long Range Planning

Committee to understand the longer-term implications of a permanent staff position.

2. Created the rationale and promoted the concept to the Board of making the Membership and Leadership committee a formally recognized committee in the Church Bylaws. The issue was then submitted to the Bylaws committee for consideration. Due to other pressing concerns, it has not given a final report back to the Board.
3. Created a Welcome brochure that makes UCCSM - its programs and its people - the central focus of our outreach to visitors and potential new members.
4. Updated and re-formatted the "Getting Involved" brochure.
5. Courtyard Connections and Friendship Dinners were expanded and aligned with welcoming and membership. Using Courtyard Connections, visitors were contacted to attend as our guests. New members are encouraged and supported in signing up for Friendship Dinners to get acquainted with other members earlier in the new membership process.
6. We started a "one Sunday a year" program to have all our members participate in greeting the community. We soon learned that it requires more overhead to run the program. While our members are very happy to do this, they don't sign up so it requires a phone call. We will be working with Katie Malich, our new Greeter coordinator, and Pat Gomez, our new Membership and Leadership chair, to jump start the program.
7. Streamlined the process of creating the photo directory so that it could be efficiently updated and routinely produced. The time to publish was significantly reduced which allows the directory to be produced throughout the year with current information. In addition to being a resource for the entire community, it is also a useful tool for those involved in membership and volunteer activities.

#### 2008-2009 M&L Recommendations:

1. Create the Congregational Life Coordinator position as a paid position. If the budget doesn't allow for this to happen in the short term, keep it as a long term goal. In the interim, find another one-year volunteer to assume the responsibilities that are now organized under this structure.
2. Recognize the Membership and Leadership committee formally. This could include being written into the Bylaws, having the Chairs and members nominated by the Nominating Committee, and including the committee as a primary contributor to the presentations done at the annual meeting. This annual report on membership would help the congregation better understand the relations between membership and budget, membership and volunteerism, membership growth and attrition, etc.

## Coffee Hour Committee

### Submitted by Nancy Howell, Coordinator

The coffee committee volunteers have enjoyed serving coffee, tea and cookies to the congregation after each church service. This year, with the help of the green committee, we are proud to continue being more aware of our environment. We serve coffee and tea in paper cups rather than Styrofoam. We serve sugar from a glass container rather than individually wrapped packages. We serve only fair traded coffee. We use cloth tablecloths rather than paper. Our napkins are made of recycled paper. As coordinator, I would like express my appreciation for a great group of people on this committee. They are: Nels Hanson, Robert Kory, Dan Nannini, Sheila Bjornlie, Leah Moore, Patrick Meighan, Lindsay Pinkham, Peggy Durst, Amy Lacombe, Gerrie Lambson, Pam Teplitz, Katie Malich, Peggy Rhoads, Lisa Cahill, and Sylvia Young. We welcome a new member to our group, Resa Foreman.

Our committee appreciates the numerous people who have donated cookies this past year which we serve with the coffee and tea.

We considered reinstating the voluntary coffee donation basket due to the increase of the costs of tea, coffee etc. It was decided that we would continue to have a totally free service for one more year.

Our goal for the next year is to remain flexible and continue the great coffee service even with the possible absence of a kitchen due to the construction of our church. We would invite anyone interested to join our volunteer group. It is an enjoyable way to meet and greet the people in our church.

## Congregational Life Coordinator Submitted by Marsha Smith

### Accomplishments:

1. In partnership with the Long Range Planning Committee and Membership and Leadership a trial Congregational Life Coordinator position was implemented to understand the longer-term implications of a permanent staff position. The original stated goal was to bring in a net 25 new members as a benchmark for this trial period. We soon learned that number was overly ambitious. According to the data and charts provided by Warren Mathews, we are in a period of membership decline. From a peak of 471 members in April 2004, we have lost a net 51 members (11%) to a level of 410 as of February 2008.

Warren's data shows that we have gone through one other extended downward trend in membership from 1987 until 1993, losing a net 79 members (19%) from a high of 413. While loss of membership could be a natural trend that happens at certain times in the life of a church, other factors, all being anecdotal, may be contributing to this trend, including:

- Transition of leadership from Bienvenidos to Membership and Leadership with close to a 2 year gap in program leadership, activity and coordination.
- Two Capital Campaign programs and potential member weariness of the continuing rise in financial

obligations.

- A lengthy building program that has left parts of the landscaping unfinished and the renovation of Forbes Hall delayed.
- A downturn, real or perceived, in our national and local economy

As important as understanding "why" membership is down, it is also important to know how we might continue to attract new members and keep them. We believe that in the last year we have devoted significant time setting up infrastructure tools and programs that are foundational to attracting new members and sustaining current members (see Membership and Leadership report). These will be the basis for evaluating membership in the coming years.

2. I adapted various forms and the Church Windows database with new fields to better understand trends, resulting in the following statistics. Each have implications on where we put our time and energy and marketing dollars to attract new members.

- Of those that signed in as a visitor and answered the survey question of "how they heard about us", a majority found their way to us via our UU Web site.
- Looking at the period from 1/2007 until 6/2008, 293 people came to our church and signed in as visitors. Of those, 18 became members giving us an apparent membership to visitor rate of 6%. However, during this period a total of 45 people became members. Assuming that they visited first, which is likely, the membership to visitor rate would be closer to 14%.
- From 7/2007 until 5/2008 we tracked the number of people who came to newcomer orientation and that later became members. Of the 48 people attending the orientation, 17 joined (33%). During the same period, of the 31 people who took membership packets, 15 (58%) became members.
- Unfortunately we do not collect data on why people leave. We have an estimated attrition average of 24 members per year (as measured from looking at the annual deletion of lapsed members for the last 4 years).

### 2008-2009 Volunteer Congregational Life Coordinator Recommendations:

1. Increase the connection and awareness of the Board to the entire community by having the members at large be liaisons to major committees in the church, including M&L, Faith in Action, RE, and Spiritual Life. Alternatively, consider that the chairs of these groups become members at large.
2. Consider getting a volunteer to act as a congregational concerns liaison with the community.
3. Look for ways to encourage more visitors to attend the Newcomer Orientation. The data suggests that this increases the likelihood of visitors moving to membership.
4. Use the newly developed Welcome brochure as our primary visitor handout. Eliminate the yellow folders due

to expense, consumption issues, and the anecdotal evidence that they appear to make very little difference in moving visitors to membership.

5. Because the membership rate is greater for people who come to Newcomer Orientation, and people who come are actively looking for information, consider using the yellow folders for this meeting – for those that wish to take them.
6. Create a database of committees and membership to better track volunteerism and terms. In addition to having archival and current information on volunteers and terms, it would be the primary data source for the “Getting Involved” brochure. Currently, this is a time intensive, on-going production because the brochure is text based and changes occur throughout the year.
7. Work intimately with the interim minister and the Board to emphasize the importance of supporting our programs that increase our welcoming culture and move guests and friends to membership.
8. Consider implementing some type of exit interview or survey to learn more about why people leave the church.

#### **deBenneville Pines Weekend**

**Jacki Weber and Amy Lacombe, Program Deans  
Margot Page, Registrar**

We had another wonderful retreat weekend at deBenneville Pines. Attendance was approximately 85 and the weekend went smoothly. Many workshops were offered, including mindful living, creative writing, photography, sudoku & Texas Hold 'em techniques, along with hiking, many kinds of crafts, yoga, canoeing, archery, and old favorites like tie-dye, water rocket launch, and dam building at the stream. The talent show Saturday night was a highlight, and was once again followed by a "haunted hike"—a flashlight walk with scary stories for the kids. S'mores in the lodge rounded out each evening. The food was plentiful and good, the camp was in great shape, and the resident staff was friendly and helpful.

Many thanks to volunteer workshop leaders Virginia Palmer, Amy Lacombe, Bob Dietz and Ellen Levy, Elizabeth Wheat and Kyle Bergerson, Wesley and Cole Bergerson, Julie Kinsinger, Joyce Holmen, Katie Malich, Alan Brunell, Amy Brunell, Suzanne DeBenedictis, Greg Coleman, Elizabeth Peterson, Elle Long, Resa Foreman, and countless others who gladly stepped in to assist when needed.

Goals for the next church year include: expanding the committee organizing the weekend with computer savvy folks to lighten the workload; continuing the development of interesting and varied workshops for the weekend as volunteer leaders emerge; and increasing our own church's attendance to 100, with a possible assist from a fellow church in Orange County to actually fill the camp (which has a capacity of 120). We have learned that the camp has a 100-camper minimum and we have not been fulfilling it. We wish everyone could join us for this great weekend!

#### **Thanksgiving Feast**

**Kathy Cook, Chair**

The Thanksgiving Feast was held on Saturday Night, November 17. The sanctuary furniture was rearranged and tables were added to create a family dinner atmosphere. Many volunteers helped to make this year's feast a success with several people providing oversight and coordination in specific areas. Special thanks goes to Lyn Armondo for taking sign-ups for 4 weeks and confirming reservations, Melanie Sharp for overseeing the kitchen and organizing the kitchen helpers, Pat Gomez and Carol Ring designing the table decorations and overseeing setting the tables, Ned Wright for Coordinating the ushers, Pat McGuire for hosting the social hour before the meal, Karen Patch for recruiting and coordinating the YRUU valets, Audrey Lyness, for coordinated wine service to the tables, Vilma Ortiz and Edna Bonacich for planning and organizing the program and Diana Spears for coordinating the recycling crew. A special thank you too for those who cooked turkeys: John Fels, Lindsey Pinkerton, Monica Mason, Ellen Levy, Craig and Kathryn Lee.

#### **ADMINISTRATION**

##### **Report of the Director of Administration**

**Melinda Ewen**

This year our congregation and staff are continuing the march of transitions, begun during the past few years, as changes in technology, democratic process and individual lives continue. Warren Mathews who, as a volunteer for 40 years, managed our church operations, settled into his retirement this year, though available for consultation when needed. Our physical plant is also continuing in transition. The Cottage was opened for use in November while discussions and plans for remodeling Forbes and our open space continue even into next year. In the late spring Judith Meyer's announced retirement launched a transition that will extend into the foreseeable future. All in all, I think our Administrative staff and volunteers are positioned well, both in skills and attitude, to support all of our programs.

Highlights of this year included:

- Our UUA official census report showed that we have 412 members, 326 pledging units, average weekly attendance of 243, and RE enrollment of 117.
- Moving things around: We lost use of our 17<sup>th</sup> Street property in October. We sorted, sold and stored items from the old building into existing spaces in the church and new portable storage units in the yard.
- The Cottage was opened for use in November after months of construction and decorating. We learned how to use the new electronic lock and alarm systems. The uncompleted landscaping around the building was supplemented by a security fence after the first unfenced night and an emergency drainage system after the first heavy rain. Since all RE classes are expected to remain in the Cottage for at least a few years, small remodeling will be instituted so the nursery can move

out of the crowded space in the office.

- IT: New computers were purchased under the expert oversight of Dan Kegel. Internet use for members and staff was restricted to “official business” to help prevent viral contamination from downloading infected files.
- Sermons (previously recorded on cassettes) are now recorded digitally, available for replay from our web site.
- Accounting: Checks are being written and expenses tracked using the commercial software QuickBooks. The budget for 08-09 was reorganized into a “program budget” as requested by the Long Range Planning Committee. A Current Assets Report was created to provide the Board with more complete financial information in an understandable form. A “Financial Review” team inspected our financial procedures and records, declared things sound, and provided suggestions for improvement.
- Wood floors in the sanctuary were refinished, gates installed on the courtyard, a major water leak repaired under the cement floor of Forbes, and a portable wheelchair ramp purchased for the sanctuary.
- Sustainable Works, a Santa Monica nonprofit, helped us complete the work to become a “model green business”. We now recycle more, use approved cleaning supplies, and are learning about environmental responsibility.
- The Personnel Committee helped hire three new staff members, worked on a new Employee Manual, helped make the decision to raise the deductible for staff health insurance coverage to stem rising costs, and supported background checks for all RE volunteers.
- Staffing changes included Rima Snyder replacing Carmen Haley as Office-RE Assistant, and increasing Sunday sexton coverage to a 2-person team to give us every-Sunday coverage, without burning out one individual. Weekday sexton hours were changed so that the sexton would also provide building security in the evening when rental groups need protection from intruders, and to lock our building securely for the night.

Office staff assisted regularly with Stewardship efforts. A special appeal was conducted in the spring to stem an anticipated income shortfall. We also supported membership efforts to provide infrastructure to welcome newcomers and do our part to provide needed services for members and friends. Many procedures were updated, including that for the photo directory, which we can now print easily in updated form.

Critical to all these successes were the efforts of many, many volunteers, who were central in implementing these and other tasks. Their names would more than fill the pages of this Annual Report, and rather than miss someone, I'll express a sincere THANK YOU to all!

#### **Report of the Finance Assistant Holly Nguyen**

It has been quite a year. I have seen so many changes at the church in response to the economy, environment, and

increase in gas prices. The housing slump and decrease in the dollar has created quite an effect in many member's pledges & contributions. Members come and go. I am able to observe this aspect by working with the Membership and Leadership committee. In addition, I am happy to be part of the green movement. The church is changing to paper products with the highest recycled content, energy efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs, and environmentally friendly cleaning supplies. With the increase in gas prices, I've seen more members riding the bus, biking to church, and carpooling with others. I am glad to be part of a supportive community and working together in dealing with all these events in many ways for the better.

#### **Report of the Office-RE Assistant Rima Snyder**

I have held the part time position as office assistant since December of 2007. Duties include preparation and printing of the weekly order of service, announcements and inserts, entering membership and RE information into the church database, and doing a weekly deposit summary of monies collected. I also provide general office support and help with requests from members and the public. I have been able to put my organizational skills to use and I have enjoyed working closely with Melinda, Holly and Judith. This job has also given me an opportunity to meet many of the church members and learn about how the church operates.

#### **Building and Grounds Committee Submitted by S. J. Guidotti, Chair**

The last year has seen the Building and Grounds Committee fulfilling its core responsibility of consulting when maintenance and repair are required to the church buildings and the surrounding grounds. Among the projects that the committee has taken part in or whose help was solicited were: the sorting, removal, and storage of materials from the 17<sup>th</sup> St. garages; the repair of the long standing water leak beneath the slab in Forbes Hall; the water infiltration beneath the cottage; repairs of both the front and Forbes doors; purchase of the wheelchair ramp, hanging of the window shades in the office; as well as many other smaller repair issues. Additionally, members of the committee painted the entryway to the building completing the painting of the sanctuary that began in the spring of 2007.

As our building program moves forward, the Building and Grounds Committee will continue to support the upgrading of our facilities in every way that it can.

#### **Office Volunteers Submitted by Anne MacQueen, Chair**

As Coordinator of Office Volunteers, I call on folks to join office work crews. On Friday afternoon we collate the Sunday Order of Service. Once a month, we prepare the newsletter for mailings and do other mailings when called upon. Volunteers this year included Lyn Armondo, Sylvia

Berke, Carolyn Berry, Sheila Bjornlie, Ellen Boag, Helen Brown, Peggy Butler, Mary Cole, Gerrie Lambson, Gist Lavoie, Jean Maucieri, Helene Morrison, John Raiford, Marjorie Zifferblatt and Grace Weaver. It's fun. Let me know if you like to be on call.

**Personnel Committee  
Submitted by Kim Miller, Chair**

The Personnel Committee this year was comprised of Victor Paddock, Barbara Kernochan, Dan Nannini and Kim Miller. Melinda Ewen is an ex officio (and very important) member. In general the Personnel Committee is mandated to review, manage and handle all matters related to personnel/human resources in the Church and make recommendations to the Board.

During this past year we completed new, updated job descriptions for every position (including some new ones) in the Church except for the Minister. We have completed a draft of the overall Personnel Policies for the Church.

We provide input, help and support to any human resource related issue or question that may arise during the year. Where necessary, letters or policies were drafted in order to handle individual issues or complaints. (There were very few this year).

We were asked to and did evaluate several contractual and outside hire issues and positions in several different areas of the Church Community. We also evaluated our overall compensation packages (that is salaries, benefits, contributions) among all staff members.

We were asked to attempt to expand the Church's compensation to all employees to provide the most generous compensation we can as well as to once again be able to be designated by the UUA as a "Fair Compensation Congregation." We are not quite there yet as a community. We worked with the Finance Committee this year, in light of our budget realities, to provide some modest increases. We hope that the Church at the annual meeting this year will approve this. In addition it is our goal within the next year (by June of 2009) to be able to provide an enhanced compensation package that will comply with the UUA "Fair Compensation" Guidelines for all staff.

We assisted in the hiring of several new positions including the Pre K teacher and a permanent Nursery teacher. We did performance reviews for all staff (including the minister) in February. This year the reviews of all were universally positive. Even though we were understaffed in several areas in the Church this year, all employees pulled together and we have had a truly productive year. Judith stated that the staff was at "peak performance" this year.

We are looking forward to continuing to support our hard working staff members in the coming two years as they can be a critical and much needed foundation to both the interim minister and the permanent settled minister.



**COMMITTEES**

**ADR (Association District Representative)**

**Carol Agate**

The 2007 UUA General Assembly was held in Portland, OR, which a number of people from our church attended. Portland was a model city for sustainability, accessibility, and all the other things we prize in Santa Monica. Even the weather was good. With the 2008 GA in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, it appears at the time of this writing that I may be the only person attending from our congregation. The registration at this point is about half of what it was in Portland.

The UUA board of trustees has been working hard this year to convert to a form of policy governance. That will result in more staff responsibility for day-to-day decisions. Those decisions will be based on the goals set by the board. During the coming year the board will be working on developing those goals.

My UUA involvement is primarily the openness implementation committee. We are responsible for advising the board on whether the governance is transparent, as required by the resolution passed by the general assembly delegates. It would be helpful to me to get feedback on how much you know about what the UUA is doing, whether you are interested, and, if not, why not.

The moderator has initiated several studies. The Fifth Principle task force is examining a way to make the association operate in a more democratic way. The ultimate authority is the general assembly, where votes are cast primarily by those people who can afford to attend GA or who live nearby. Next year, an election year, GA will be in Salt Lake City, the first time an election has been in the west.

As for the Pacific Southwest District (PSWD), it is no longer operating under a committee structure and the board size is half what it used to be. Last year was my final year on the bylaws committee, and our committee's proposal was to eliminate the bylaws committee. After about 20 years I am no longer involved with the district, and other than passing on emails to people in our church who might be interested in the topic at hand, there is no other job I am doing as a representative. If anyone would be interested in taking this on, please let me know.

**Art Wall Committee**

**Submitted by Nels Hanson**

The Art Wall Committee initially planned for Art Wall shows through December 2007 because of planned construction on Forbes Hall. When the committee found out that construction was not going to happen in January, more artists were identified. Highlights for the year were the UCCSM History display organized and mounted by Rob Briner in October and Our Own Artists display in December. Two church artists had individual shows during the year. During most of 2008 Melinda Ewen has worked diligently with Mathilde Lombard to make sure that there is art displayed each month for our church members and guests.

### **Bookstore Committee**

#### **Carol Agate and Nancy Babbitt, Co-Chairs**

The bookstore has become a regular feature of the coffee hour, with its books spread out on a table most Sundays. Every few weeks we promote new or sale books, or those on a specific topic, by setting up a second table.

We serve as one of several places for visitors to go to learn more about Unitarian Universalism. We always feature books published by the UUA telling of our history and philosophy.

Income from the bookstore goes to the new building fund. All the books are discounted because we do not charge the sales tax that we pay ourselves. Also, since these are books available only by mail, they cost less from our bookstore because we pay the postage.

After Judith leaves we will continue to sell her book, "Leaving Room for Hope." Keep it in mind as a unique gift item.

Contributions of your books are welcome as long as they are in mint condition and are either new or timeless. All other books may be donated to the library.

Many thanks to the wonderful bookstore staff of Rebecca Crawford, Phil Bonacich, Max Johnson, Jacki Paddock, and Sandra Trutt. If you love books and chatting with customers, especially visitors, come join our staff.

### **Bylaws and Policies Committee**

#### **Kathy Cook, Chair**

Members: Carol Agate, Kathy Cook (chair), Bob Dietz, Tom Hamilton, Kim Miller.

The Bylaws and Policies Committee serves at the direction of the Board of Directors to review existing Bylaws and Policies and to draft Bylaws revisions or new policies when the need exists. This year the committee drafted a policy for the hiring of independent contractors and deliberated regarding Bylaws related to the Nominating Committee and the Ministerial Search Committee. Also discussed was the idea of having additional Committees established by the Bylaws, including the Membership and Leadership Committee and the pros and cons of developing policies regarding term limits for committee membership or leadership of some committees that are not established by the Bylaws. No Bylaws changes or other new policies were recommended to the Board this year. Some items were carried over into the next church year.

### **Dining for Dollars Committee**

#### **Submitted by Nels Hanson**

Dining for Dollars had another successful year, saddened soon after the end of the auction with the death of Helen Burns, who was the driving force behind this important church event since 1991. There were 68 events this year and the auction raised \$25,000 for the church. Sue Moore, Natalie Kahn, and Geri Lambson worked with Helen throughout the fall and early winter to prepare for the two Sunday auction period and they brought in several more volunteers to process bids during the auction. Nels Hanson

supported the event by maintaining and improving the Access database that made entering events, creating invoices, D4\$ tickets, and other support documentation manageable for everyone involved.

### **Historian**

#### **Rob Briner**

There are now over 10,000 indexed documents in the church archives, including but not limited to (1) monthly newsletters; (2) weekly Orders of Service; (3) Minutes and other documents related to board meetings and annual meetings; (4), 2,300 membership cards from 1956-2004; and (5) Rev. Judith Meyer sermons from 1993 to the present, hard copies and cassette tapes. Upon completion of Forbes Hall remodeling, the archives will be returned to on-site storage (since 2004 storage has been off-site, at no cost). At some point in the future, when technologically practical, all archived documents should be scanned and available to anyone interested on demand. Any low cost or sponsored proposal to do so would be welcomed.

### **Lending Library**

#### **Sandra Trutt**

I attended to book donations left at church. Some were included in our collection, and some were taken to Goodwill Industries, as appropriate. Guests and members use the honor system to check out books for one month. Seems to be working well although some books do disappear. This system saves me the time and unpleasant task of calling people to remind them of overdue books.

We will have to box up books during Forbes remodel and will continue the lending library once bookshelves are available again.

### **Long Range Planning Committee**

#### **Submitted by Patricia Wright, Chair**

Long Range Planning's (LRP) role is to look far out, see where we need to be, check in with members to confirm that LRP's wishes match up with congregational wishes, and figure out what resources we need to get us there.

The LRP Committee consisted this year of Phil Bonacich, Rebecca Crawford, Judith Meyer, John Raiford, and Patricia Wright. This fiscal year began with a reaffirmation of our vision and a dual mandate to find ways to fund our vision and to explore programmatic movements to enhance our vision.

"We want to build a church that is an agent of transformation, central in individual people's lives and in the community at large. We desire to reflect our larger community and its diversity and to be a place where people feel welcome, well connected, valued, and loved."

The year was one primarily of continued exploration. We held a combined meeting of LRP, Stewardship, M&L, RE, and our volunteer Coordinator of Congregational Life to explore ways that these entities could work together. We met with Cathie Gentile, who presented her vision for FIA, which involves allocating a greater percentage of the church budget for FIA and ideally a full-time staff person. We added

a provision to our vision budget for a full-time FIA staff person (recall that the first phase of the budget was approved at the 2007 Annual Meeting). We brainstormed ways to enhance volunteerism among our 400+ members. We met with Catherine Farmer, who talked about Lifespan RE, its role in the congregation, and her goals for achieving it. Melinda Ewen brought details on revenue generated from use of the building. Alison Kendall helped us think of future ways of using our facilities. We met with Bronwyn Jones and Beverly Alison of the Interim Minister search committee. Amongst ourselves we explored the notion of targeted fundraising and ways to preserve the memory of those who leave us.

Ultimately, we recognized that we need to be creative in ways to achieve our vision that are not solely based on money, primarily pledges. In the coming year we will be looking for ways to do this and also to define and execute our role in the coming transitions. We have benefited so much from Judith's participation in LRP and we will miss her.

### **New Building Program Submitted by Carol Kerr, Chair**

The New Building Committee reached a milestone this year when it completed construction on the Cottage and thereby created new exploration space for our R.E. program and new meeting space for our various Church groups. In December, the NBC also presented plans to the Congregation for a new classroom building project that would have been ideal in meeting many of the congregation's needs. Unfortunately, that dream project also had a price tag that outstripped our modest budget. The Committee reorganized itself in January to reflect the need for better congregational coordination and shared ownership of finance, construction and design efforts. Gene Balas became the head of a Finance subcommittee of the NBC, and Rod Lane became the head of the Construction and Design subcommittee. Pat Parkerton became the head of the Congregational Concerns Subcommittee of the NBC and has subsequently agreed to chair the NBC for 2008-2009 with Tom Hamilton.

With reinvigorated leadership, the NBC led a series of congregational meetings and town hall meetings this Spring that ultimately led to congregational approval of ambitious landscaping plans around the cottage and the parkways surrounding the Church campus. These plans include a courtyard project that will offer needed outdoor space and parking along the alley. The congregation also approved proceeding with plans for the long over-due renovation of Forbes Hall that will allow that aging space to continue to serve our community for another 30 (or so) years. Importantly, these revised plans also maintained our hard-won development entitlements in the event that the congregation chooses to proceed with a larger project in the future. In another bright point this year, we received a grant from the City of Santa Monica to help fund projects that reduce water usage on our landscaping project. Our newly approved landscaping and renovation plans, although modified from the dream building project, are within our budget and reflect the needs and mission of our community.

We continued to benefit enormously from the support of our "professional" volunteers: David Denton, Greg Wood, Steve Paddock, Rod Lane, Keith Ludowitz, Grace Phillips and Christine Hardin. We also benefited from the continued support and efforts of our paid professionals: Ralph Mechur, Alison Kendall and Turk O'Conner and his construction crew. Other volunteers who continue to devote time and energy to the NBC include Carol Kerr, Carol Agate, Gene Balas, Tom Hamilton, Pat Parkerton, Marsha Smith, and Marv Pulliam.

### **Newsletter Committee Submitted by Dayla McDonald, Chair**

The UUCCSM newsletter publishes articles and announcements by and about our congregation. Our goal is to keep our members and friends informed of church activities, board and committee actions, and involvement opportunities. The newsletter also provides a forum for members to communicate opinions of interest to the UUCCSM community. The newsletter is distributed monthly, by mail and/or e-mail. Please submit articles and letters by the fifteenth of the month to [newsletter@uusm.org](mailto:newsletter@uusm.org).

### **Nominating Committee Submitted by S. J. Guidotti, Chair**

In addition to work authorized by the UUCCSM Bylaws of finding candidates for the Board and the Executive Offices, the Nominating Committee was asked by the Board and the President to assist in recruiting members of other UUCCSM Committees. In this task, we have been repeatedly successful and this expansion of duties looks to be continued in the future.

The coming year will be even busier as the Nominating Committee will select individuals who will comprise the Ministerial Search Committee.

As the outgoing Chair of this year's Committee, I wish to commend all of the church members who have contributed their time and intelligence during the period in which I have served. It has been both rewarding and pleasurable and for this, I thank you.

### **Report of the Webmaster Submitted Elizabeth Fuller**

The uusm.org website has benefited from several technological advances this year: a website search engine, automatically-updating news feeds from the UUA and "UU World," and a new church calendar, which is shared with the church staff (so that when the office calendar is updated, the new information shows up automatically on the website calendar.)

The most recent, and perhaps most popular, addition are audio versions of Judith's sermons. The services are recorded by Tom Ahern on a digital voice recorder, then saved as .mp3 files and uploaded to the site. Users can listen to and/or download the files by clicking on the "Listen" links next to the descriptions on the "Sermons" page.

In the coming months, we plan to create an RSS ("Real Simple Syndication") feed so people who subscribe can receive automatic notices when new audio files are added, or automatic downloads ("podcasts") to their computers or digital audio devices.

Finally, the design of the site is now 10 years old (time flies!)...and definitely due for a thorough graphic update.

## **ACTIVITY AND SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS**

### **4th Friday Lunch Bunch Submitted by Lyn Armondo**

We offer a time to get together with old friends and meet new people. We don't have a format or agenda, but if someone wants to suggest something we'll give it a try. We do have lots of good talk about old times and some about current events. Bring your lunch to the Cottage around noon on the fourth Friday of each month. We serve tea and cookies.

### **Books 'R Us Submitted by Phil Bonacich**

Books R' Us is a monthly fiction discussion group that meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Phil and Edna Bonacich in Mar Vista. The only rule is to have read the book before the meeting. Light refreshments are served. Average attendance is 8-12.

### **Caregivers Support Group Submitted by Joyce Holmen**

Being responsible for providing care for a chronically ill family member or friend can be alternately depressing, isolating, rewarding, frustrating, and overwhelming. You never know when the next crisis is coming, so you need to be ready for it. It's good to discuss what's 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 and health.

Our small group has been meeting for seven-and-a-half years, with people coming and going as their needs change. Some members provide round-the-clock care for a spouse or parent, some give part-time care, and others monitor things long-distance. We've had experience and expertise in taking care of loved ones with various situations including Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes, cancer, depression, heart problems, and hospice.

Our goal for the coming year is to keep being available for caregivers in our church community. We invite you to contact us even if you can't attend meetings, which are on the third Tuesday of the month, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. in Forbes Hall. For information, please email Joyce Holmen, [mort4@earthlink.net](mailto:mort4@earthlink.net), call Helen Brown, (310) 450-3087, in the evening, or look for one of us on Sunday.

## **Ernie Pipes Lecture Series Leonard Adler, Chair**

The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Pipes' Lecture was presented at the church on February 2, 2008, by Mike Farrell, actor and activist. The 1<sup>st</sup> through 13<sup>th</sup> Pipes' lectures (1991-2004) were chaired by past president Ray Goodman, succeeded by past president Len Adler for the 14<sup>th</sup> through 17<sup>th</sup> (2005-2008). The 18<sup>th</sup> annual Pipes' Lecture – on a date in 2009 as yet undetermined – will be chaired by Rob Briner, supported by a committee that's looking for new members (longtime committee member Nedra Bickel is retiring to San Diego). This endowment fund, established upon the retirement of Ernie Pipes in 1991, supports an annual budget of approximately \$1,500, that can be spent by the committee on a speaker's fee, printed materials, and reception, and has traditionally been publicized internally and externally via public service (free) announcements. Any new creativity in this regard would be particularly welcomed in planning 2009's lecture.

## **fUUsion**

### **Submitted by Robin Lowney-Lankton**

fUUsion continues to be an active group for younger adults at the church. During the past year, fUUsion decided to expand our membership to include anyone who considered them self to be a "younger adult" rather than placing an age restriction on membership. fUUsion continued our efforts to outreach to and welcome younger visitors and new members at the church. The listserv grew to 62 members.

In the last year, fUUsion held 27 events ranging from lunches after church, to museum outings, film screenings, parties, and hikes. fUUsion completed 3 service projects, including staffing 2 work weekends at de Benneville Pines, and participating in a food sort during the holiday season. fUUsion members Katrina Thompson and Sarah Gaillot started and co-facilitated a covenant group for younger adults.

We became more involved and supported a variety of activities within the church. fUUsion members hosted a music reception, taught RE, served as greeters, attended Courtyard Connections, and sponsored Dining for Dollars events. Sarah Gaillot and Robin Lowney-Lankton also served as church delegates at District Assembly and networked with other young adults the District.

fUUsion goals for FY 08-09 include: plan and attend the Younger Adult Camp at de Benneville Pines; complete four service projects at the Church or in the community; increase listserv membership to 70 members; add spiritual components to fUUsion activities; and hold at least 15 fUUsion events. We plan to continue our outreach efforts during fellowship in Forbes Hall, flyers at the visitors' table, a listserv, and blog.

## **The Men's Group Submitted by Phil Bonacich**

UUSM Men's group meets the first and third Thursdays of every month. There are usually 6-10 in attendance. At each meeting we discuss a pre-agreed upon topic. Our additional goal is to be useful to the congregation.

**Poetry Group**  
**Submitted by Diana Spears**

The Poetry Group has retained its core members: Arvid Knudsen, Carolyn Berry, George Serruta and his wife Helena Contreras-Chacel, Pat Shinaberger and her son Chris, Diana Spears and Robert Venegas. Julie Gilliam, Diane Monteith, and Katie Malich come when they can.

Our formats alternate between one member presenting an in-depth presentation of a poet (or group) and members reading the poems from the poet, and theme evenings with each member bringing several poems on a topic.

Valentine's Day is made more special by each member bringing one Valentine to exchange. Arvid Knudsen presented Shelley, Keats and Byron in September and Langston Hughes in March. Helena presented Spanish Romantic poet Jose Zorrilla in November. Two music oriented evenings were on Leonard Cohen, and an evening of the Beatles. Diana Spears presented three black women poets: Nicki Giovanni, Wanda Coleman and Gwendolyn Brooks. Julie Gilliam will be presenting Dada poet Switters in June. Our theme evenings were holidays in December, Valentine's in March and travel in April.

**Science Non-fiction Reading Group**  
**Submitted by Rebecca Crawford**

The Science Non-Fiction Book Group meets on the third Tuesday of each month to discuss a book from current popular science literature. In addition, the group has expanded somewhat into history, with an emphasis on science or scientists. We also try to gain some awareness of green living practices. Some of the recent books we have discussed include: *The World without Us*, by Alan Weisman; *Your Inner Fish: A Journey into the 3.5 Billion-Year History of the Human Body*, by Neil Shubin; and a book about important Supreme Court cases. We meet in the home of Rebecca Crawford at 7:00 pm for dessert, with the discussion starting at 7:30. All are welcome, but we have some expectation that people will have read the book before coming.

**Report of the Women's Alliance**

**Submitted by Joyce Holmen, President**

In 1927 both our church and our Women's Alliance were founded. For 81 years, the Alliance, as an affiliated organization, has provided ordinary and extraordinary opportunities for interesting programs, fundraising, worship, good food, leadership training, community outreach, personal growth, and getting to know some amazing women. Acknowledging the many gifts received from our Unitarian and Universalist foremothers, we tend the flame that they tended for us.

The Alliance meets quarterly for a Sunday lunch and sharing circle to talk about books, emotions, family, feminism, friends, gardens, history, love, mentors, music, peace work, spirituality, and more. Program details are in the church newsletter. Non-members are always welcome to participate.

This past year we enjoyed a pair of discussions of Lu Ann Darling's new book, *Discover Your Mentoring Mosaic, A Guide to Enhanced Mentoring* (available at the bookstore in Forbes Hall). Lu Ann notes that the very first presentation of her research findings was made to the Women's Alliance in the mid-80s. It was only fitting that we profited from her latest insights into the mentoring process. We are also pleased to co-sponsor with Interweave an annual picnic, so we'll see you in the church courtyard on August 10th.

Dues from 15 members let us maintain membership in the UU Women's Federation, which awards grants to explore feminist theology and for outreach projects in the U.S. and abroad; to find out more, please visit [www.uuwf.org](http://www.uuwf.org).

**Zen Meditation Group**  
**Submitted by Bernie Silvers**

I am proud of the fact that so many different members and people from the community have attended the Zen Discussion & Meditation class at one time or other. They have benefited in many ways, so they have told me, by the reductions of stress in their lives, by understanding in a more profound way who they are, by using the numerous meditation methods which they use in the class and at home, by looking at the wisdom of various spiritual leaders and developing to a greater extent compassion and love. We have spent time looking at the insights of Buddhists and Unitarians and the wisdom of each faith. We have spent time on issues such as anger, sex, love, happiness, identity, relationships and death drawing again from the wisdom of the world's religions.

I want to thank all of those who have come to the class and shown interest, participation and asked incredible questions that have helped all of those in the class, especially myself.

My goal for the next year is to take on new topics and show again how spiritual insights can help in dealing with suffering and difficult situations that at one time or other we all face.



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