

REPORT ON PROGRAMS

The Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica



Fiscal year
July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013

1260 Eighteenth Street
Santa Monica, CA 90404

Phone	310/ 829-5436
Fax	310/ 998-9181
E-mail	office@uusm.org
Web Site	www.uusm.org

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LEADERSHIP

Board of Directors

	<u>2012-2013</u>	<u>2013-2014</u>
President	Cynthia Cottam	Cynthia Cottam
Vice President	Barbara Gibbs	Barbara Gibbs
Vice President	Rob Briner	Rob Briner (VP Secretary)
Treasurer	Kit Shaw	Kit Shaw
Past President	Bronwen Jones	Bronwen Jones
Member at Large	Pat Gomez	Pat Gomez
Member at Large	Rebecca Crawford	Rebecca Crawford
Member at Large	Bruno Lacombe	Bruno Lacombe
Member at Large	Vilma Ortiz	Vilma Ortiz

Staff

Minister	Rev. Rebecca Benefiel Bijur
Minister Emeritus	Rev. Ernie Pipes
Director of Religious Exploration	Catherine Farmer Loya
Church Administrator	Nurit Gordon
Admin & Finance Assistant	Nancy Thompson
Ministry and Office Assistant	Rima Snyder
Director of Music	DeReau Farrar
Associate Director of Music	Dr. Irene Gregorio-Stoup
Weekday Sexton	Kevin Roller
Sunday and Rental Sexton	Thomas Ahern
Preschool Teacher	Roxanne Coleman-Bell
Sunday Nursery Teacher	ZaNyaa Lee

Nominating Committee

<u>2012-2013</u>	<u>2013-2014</u>
Jerry Gates	Gretchen Goetz
Pam Teplitz	Teri Bond
Phyllis Kory	Stephen Young
Stephen Young	Phyllis Kory
Rima Snyder	Katie Malich
Katie Malich	Jerry Gates

MEMBERSHIP

To become a member of the Church a person shall:

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

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

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

A "Friend" plays an active role in our community, supports the Church financially, but has chosen not to assume official church membership.

Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA)

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

REPORT ON MINISTRY

Reverend Rebecca Benefiel Bijur

Here we have gathered, gathered side by side...

It has been a delight to welcome DeReau Farrar, Director of Music, and Dr. Irene Gregorio-Stoup, Associate Director of Music, to our worship staff this year. I look forward to a summer of partnership with Emmalinda McLean, our part-time Acting Director of Religious Education, and to Catherine's return in the fall from her time of family leave.

...circle of kinship, come and step inside!

This year we re-launched Small Group Ministry, a year-long program dedicated to deep listening and spiritual reflection on our lives. Thank you to the Small Group Ministry Facilitators for your commitment and leadership in our pilot year, and to the nearly 100 people who signed up to participate in this new ministry at our program launch in January.

Here we have gathered, called to celebrate...

With joy, we dedicated ourselves to our children with ceremonies of welcome for Milo Lowney Lankton and Nathan James Sutton Bijur. Together, we mourned the deaths of Gaye Deal and Maggie Pipes, even as we shared the wonderful stories of their decades of commitment, leadership, and service to this church and to the wider community. We mourned, too, for Judy Federick and Jirina Kyas, both gone too soon from our lives.

*...we who now gather know each other's pain,
kindness can heal us: as we give, we gain...*

With great pride, I report that your Generous Congregation plate-sharing gifts of over \$7,000 have served the children, youth, and families of the following organizations: Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice – Los Angeles (CLUE-LA), Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services, Gays and Lesbians Initiating Dialogue for Equality (GLIDE), Homeboy Industries, Ocean Park Community Center (OPCC), Our House Grief Support, St. Joseph Center, TreePeople, Turning Point, Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA), UU Legislative Ministry – California (UULM), UU Service Committee, UU Trauma Response Ministry, Venice Family Clinic, and the Westside Food Bank.

Thank you for all you do to support the ministry of our church, and to live our values here and in the wider world.

Gratefully,

Rev. Rebecca Benefiel Bijur



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Cynthia Cottam

The Officers of our Board begin their terms immediately after the close of the business meeting in which they are elected. This is a startling reality for a new officer, especially one who hasn't served on the Board. Last year all four of your officers were new. Fortunately, we had the wisdom of our Past President, Bronwen Jones, to guide us. Thank you to Bronwen for leading us through the first steep steps of our learning curve.

When I took office, our minister was half way through her Family Leave. One unforeseen advantage of this situation was that she came back to work during the summer, and we had some of that less hectic time to begin establishing what has grown into a wonderful working relationship and to work on some plans for the new year. Much has been accomplished between then and now.

Our staff is all in place, and they work together congenially and productively. Nancy Thompson, our Administrative and Finance Assistant, started work the week after our election. DeReau Farrar, our Director of Music, started work in August and quickly filled out our musical staff with a group of delightful and talented musicians. They all joined Nurit Gordon, our Church Administrator, who started work the previous August. It has been a pleasure to work with them.

We have a new roof. Such a simple thing to say, and such a complicated thing to accomplish: two years in the planning, and two weeks in construction, which we hardly even noticed. We all owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Bryan Oakes and Beth Brownlie for the work they have done on this project. We have more exciting plans for the coming year. Thank you also to everyone who raised money and to everyone who contributed to the roof fund.

Our Pledge Committee raised \$410,000 in pledges this year, despite a small committee and a very late start. Your Board went through weeks of nail biting until Abby Arnold stepped up to the challenge and accepted the job of chairperson. Thank you to Abby, Natalie Kahn, Amy Lacombe and Lucy Hahn for doing this difficult and critical work.

Dining for Dollars met its fundraising goal. Melissa Weaver stepped up as chairperson. Sue Moore provided her invaluable expertise, and the committee continued the wonderful tradition of this important fundraiser and community builder.

Church rental income increased this year due to our administrative staff working hard on maximizing group rentals. The Rentals Committee has just published a beautiful events brochure, which you all received in the mail. We hope this will increase event rentals.

The Personnel Committee, after a busy year of rewriting job descriptions and conducting interviews, completely revised the Personnel Policy Manual, which was recently approved by the Board. Thank you especially to Denise Helton, who spent a year of research and writing on this project.

Your Board worked with the Committee on Ministry and the minister herself to complete the third and final required extensive ministerial evaluation, which was accepted by the UUA. Our minister has now been awarded Final Fellowship. Congratulations to her!

Your Board attended its retreat last September, where we created a Board covenant and established three goals. Stimulated by Rev. Erika Hewitt's evaluation that our community possesses a "culture of assessment" and does not deal kindly with disagreement, we chose as our primary goal to work on creating good relationships among the members of our congregation. Last month close to 20 people attended a two-day conference in Oxnard and participated in workshops related to Nonviolent Communication, a movement started by the psychologist Marshall Rosenberg. Thank you to Kris Langabeer for organizing. We hope to build on this experience in the coming months and to hold a workshop in the spring to create a covenant of good relationships for the entire congregation. Our second goal is to support leadership development within our congregation. Our third goal is to support lay ministry. These are all ambitious goals and we will continue to work on them.

I cannot list all the meaningful activities that continue to occur every week. We are a vibrant community with a wealth of talented volunteers. I have not even touched upon our Lifespan Religious Exploration programs. You have recently seen some evidence of their good work on Sunday mornings. From the Pride Parade, to Faith in Action's social justice work; from Our Whole Lives sexuality education to our Newcomer and Membership activities; from our fabulous website and art wall and newsletter to the welcoming greetings we share at the end of every service, we have a great deal to be thankful for.

Your Board is continuing intact through the coming year. We approach our tasks with hope and enthusiasm.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Treasurer Report, Kit Shaw

Discussion of Current Financial Results and Next Fiscal Year Budget

Financial results for the current fiscal year (2012-2013) have remained largely as budgeted. Net results have proven better than expected. Nevertheless, the board (with recommendation from the Finance committee) approved a budget for the coming year that is somewhat frugal, while continuing to preserve church programs.

Over four years ago, with the downturn of the economy, the finance committee implemented deficit budgets based on the estimation that the church's resources were sufficient to cover approximately three years of moderate deficits. In

actuality, only 2 of 3 past fiscal budgets resulted in deficits, while one year, the church had a surplus. Additionally, while the church should have run out of unrestricted savings by now, the church has received sizable donations in bequests from members, which has kept the reserves funded.

This fiscal year, the church is performing better than expected with an approximate \$29,000 in surplus (as of this writing, April 2013). This surplus is a result of a combination of lower spending and higher income than budgeted. However, there are still 2 months left of the current fiscal year, and this may change depending on what the church receives in income and spends over the last two months. This fiscal year, we have also received large bequests from Drew Still and Judy Federick. The Drew Still bequest is restricted to the building program, while Judy Federick's bequest is unrestricted. These two bequests have put the church in very good financial standing.

The Stewardship (Pledge) committee has continued to work hard to keep donations growing, despite a static number of members. Excellent stewardship (previously under the leadership of Patrick Meighan, and currently under the leadership of Abby Arnold) is again going to create a less than expected deficit or small surplus by the end of this fiscal year.

For the upcoming fiscal year (2013-2014), the finance committee has again recommended a deficit budget. Because the church is currently in good financial condition, the finance committee felt that it was unwise to cut programs and staff when both are needed to sustain current members and attract new members.

Revenue is expected to increase slightly, thanks to the continued hard work of the stewardship committee. Rental income is also expected to increase as Nancy, the finance assistant, and the rental committee continue to actively promote rental of the Forbes hall, courtyard and cottage.

Expense increases in the 2013-2014 budget are due to the following: small compensation increases for staff (at the recommendation of the Personnel Committee), additional funds to the Generous Congregation program (moving from 40% to 50% of non-pledged contributions at Sunday services), an increase in the church's dues to Congregational affairs (UUA and PSWD), additional funds to the Faith in Action Committee, and an increase in funds to building maintenance to continue with repairs/upgrades that have previously been deferred.

An important change to the 2013-2014 budget is that the Finance Committee has attempted to show all expected financial activity in the budget. In previous years, all donations to and expenses from restricted funds never appeared in the budget. In the new budget, money that is already available in the different funds appears as income under the line "Dedicated Fund Transfers." Then, the corresponding amount appears as an expense under the appropriate program category. The finance committee

and Board agree that this accounting should provide a more accurate picture of the church's finances.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Denise Helton

The Personnel Committee met regularly throughout fiscal year 2012/13 to address personnel-related concerns as they arose and to work on long-range projects. We made steady progress on our goal of standardizing all HR-related documents, processes and procedures, which has included rewriting most of the job descriptions and employment agreements. We have established best practices in regards to recruitment procedures to ensure that recruitments run smoothly and that we are in compliance with state and federal laws. Our most involved project during the past year has been the rewriting of the church's outdated Personnel Policy Manual, a process which included reviewing personnel manuals from UU churches across the country. The new Personnel Policy Manual was approved by the Board on April 9, 2013. Our next project will be writing a manual of procedures and best practices for the Personnel Committee.

We began the fiscal year with the successful recruitment of a new Director of Music, DeReau K. Farrar. As part of DeReau's vibrant new vision for the music program, in the fall of 2012, Dr. Irene Gregorio-Stoup transitioned from Accompanist to Associate Director of Music, and several section leaders were hired. Also, In December 2012, we welcomed Roxanne Coleman-Bell as our new Preschool RE teacher, and are now preparing to welcome Emmalinda McLean as Acting DRE, who will fill in part-time while Catherine is on family leave.

During the past year, we have continued to work closely with Reverend Bijur and the church staff as employment-related issues arose, maintaining our commitment to fairness, clarity and standardization of procedures. Our active committee has been comprised of Barbara Kernochan, Rob Briner, and myself. We look forward to Garland Allan joining us in the new year.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Jerry Gates

Members: Jerry Gates, Chair, Phyllis Kory, Katie Malich, Rima Snyder, Pam Teplitz, and Stephen Young

Role: The Nominating Committee shall nominate one or more candidates for each position to be filled by election at the next Annual Meeting. This includes the Officers, two Members-at-Large of the Board, and two members of the Nominating Committee, plus any elective positions in which a vacancy occurred during the previous year. The Committee shall submit its list of nominees to the Board at a Board meeting held at least thirty-one days before the Annual Meeting.

The final ballot shall include nominations by petition of ten or more voting members, submitted to the Board and

validated by the First Vice-President.

The final ballot shall include a list of all offices for which elections are to be held, and an alphabetical list of all candidates for each office. The ballot shall provide an opportunity to cast an explicit 'nay' vote against any candidate running unopposed.

Meetings: July and November, 2012; January and February 2013

Board Nominations

President: Cynthia Cottam, second term

First VP: Barbara Gibbs, second term

Second VP: Rob Briner, second term

Treasurer: Kit Shaw, second term

Member-at-Large: Pat Gomez, second term

Continuing on the Board

Member-at-Large: Rebecca Crawford, term expires 2014

Member-at-Large: Bruno Lacombe, term expires 2014

Member-at-Large: Vilma Ortiz, term expires 2014

Past President: : Bronwen Jones

Nominating Committee Nominations

Teri Bond

Gretchen Goetz

Nominating Committee Continuing

Jerry Gates, term expires 2015

Stephen Young, term expires 2015

Phyllis Kory, term expires 2014

Katie Malich, term expires 2014

PEACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Co-chairs: Roberta Frye, Cathie Gentile

Peace: the PSJ holds bi-monthly peace vigils with the Mar Vista Neighbors 4 Peace & Justice at the corner of Barrington and National.

Anti-racist activity: The commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and the program of the Thanksgiving feast. Book discussion based on Michelle Alexander's The New Jim Crow. Members also participated in monthly meetings of the Santa Monica Committee for Racial Justice.

Economic justice: PSJ collaborated with CLUE and other groups in the Clean Carwash Campaign in an effort to organize carwash facilities in the Los Angeles area, including Santa Monica. The Santa Monica City Council agreed to strictly adhere to policies requiring those contracting with the city to respect the law, and stated that the City Attorney would investigate practices at carwashes in Santa Monica.

Immigration: In September, three PSJ members joined five others in a visit sponsored by the Detention Watch Network (DWN) to the Theo Lacey

Prison in Orange County. The PSJ is currently looking into setting up a program of regular visits with immigrants in detention in collaboration with CIVIC, the Community Initiative for Visiting Immigrants in Confinement.

PSJ also worked with the UU Legislative Ministry to support the TRUST Act, a California legislative initiative that would require that police officials issue ICE detainers only for immigrants accused of serious or violent crimes. Although Gov. Brown vetoed the TRUST Act, the California legislature is working on a revised version in the hope that it will meet the Governor's requirements.

Specific Events:

September 29. In conjunction with efforts to organize carwash workers, the PSJ committee screened the film *Salt of the Earth*, which focuses on a 1951 miners' strike in New Mexico, followed by a discussion.

October 13. A visit to the Great Wall of Los Angeles, a half-mile mural that documents the cultural and ethnic diversity of Los Angeles, was sponsored by the MRDC as a Dining for Dollars event for the third year in a row.

November 17. The PSJ presented the annual Thanksgiving Feast program in which we give thanks for the contributions of the diverse racial, ethnic and cultural groups that have helped to build our society.

December 1. PSJ presented the film *He Who Must Die*, based on the Kazantzakis novel, in which a Greek village is tested when refugees from a neighboring village that has been destroyed solicit their help.

January 16. The PSJ had a table at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Westside Coalition Community Fair Celebration.

March 12. PSJ and the ACLU co-hosted "Drones: Killers and Spies," with ACLU lawyers speaking about extrajudicial assassinations of "suspected militants" in the Middle East and a KNX investigative reporter spoke about the use of small drones for surveillance domestically. A Q&A followed.

In March and April PS&J will led the book discussion group of Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow*, the UUA Common Read for 2012-13.

HISTORIAN/ARCHIVIST

Rob Briner

Along with the supplies for many other activities, the church's archives have settled in at Forbes Hall (built in 1960; rededicated on October 17, 2010) after a major remodel. The Art Wall hosted a church history display in October 2010, and approximately 25 boxes of documents were moved in April 2011, from being stored off site for six years to a storage area on the second floor of Forbes Hall. Plans are to install a

secure display cabinet on the wall in the Arizona entrance foyer, next to the relief of Angie Forbes, that will display one or two framed items from the church's history on a rotating basis. The most significant ongoing collection of UUSM history is the archiving of the monthly newsletter.

COFFEE HOUR COMMITTEE

Nancy Howell

The Coffee Committee volunteers have continued to enjoy serving coffee, tea and cookies to the congregation after each church service. We also provide coffee service for special events. We are proud to continue being more aware of our environment. We serve coffee and tea in ceramic cups. Coffee grounds are put into the compost bin. We serve sugar from a container rather than individually wrapped packages. We serve only fair traded coffee. We use cloth tablecloths rather than paper. Our napkins are made of recycled paper. We enjoy our new kitchen.

As coordinator, I would like to express my appreciation for a great group of dedicated people on this committee. They are as follows:

Robert and Phyllis Kory, Sheila Bjornlie, Leah Moore, Kit Shaw, Alicia Van Ooyen, Karen Canady, Linda van Ligten, , Karen Hsu Patterson, Jennifer Westbay, Patrick Meighan, Amy Lacombe, Pam Teplitz, Peggy Rhoads, Sanna Egan, Resa Foreman, and Sylvia Young. We welcome the new members of our team. Kirk Attebury, Sheila Cummins, Jila Tayefehnowrooz, and Linda Marten.

Our committee appreciates the numerous people who have donated cookies this past year, particularly those who have purchased Girl Scout cookies and have donated them to us.

Our goal for the next year is to remain flexible and continue the great coffee service

We would invite anyone interested to join our volunteer group. It is an enjoyable way to meet and greet the people in our church.

KNITTERS AND FRIENDS

Karen Patch

Knitters and Friends continues to meet between services every week to share our projects and fellowship. We continue to make items of comfort for Rev Bijur to give when making pastoral calls on church members (Prayer Shawl Ministry). Our Annual Holiday Bazaar is a great source of pride and through it we are able to contribute financially to the congregation.

ANNUAL PIPES LECTURE SERIES

Rob Briner

This committee was created and the fund established in 1991, by its first chair, Dr. Ray Goodman, and second chair, Leonard Adler, to honor UUSM's then retiring minister of 35 years, Ernest D. ("Ernie") Pipes, Jr. and his wife, Margaret ("Maggie").

The inaugural lecture was held in October 1991, by the then outgoing president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, William Schulz. Speakers in the past five years have been Tim Rutten, Los Angeles Times journalist and columnist (2009), George Takei, actor/activist (2010), Father Gregory Boyle of Homeboy Industries (2011), and Reza Aslan, academic and writer on the subject of historic and contemporary Islam (2012). The 22nd annual Pipes lecture took place on March 9, 2013, with San Francisco-based academic and author, Steven D. Goodman, speaking on "Opening the Heart of Compassion: Buddhist Reflections."

INTERWEAVE

Janet Goodwin

In one of its signature events, Interweave brought over 50 marchers to last June's LA Pride Parade. We also co-sponsored the Annual Interweave & Women's Alliance All-Church Picnic in July and donated the proceeds to Common Ground. The Coming Out Day service in October featured multiple speakers: Ron Crane & John Fels lit the chalice in memory of Judy Federick; Galen Dodd, one of our UU youth, spoke about coming out as a young athlete; and David Helfer, a UU ministry intern, spoke about transgender issues. This past year, Interweave began holding monthly meetings and agreed to host a monthly chat group for bisexual adults and allies. As a current goal, Interweave is strongly in favor of placing a sign or banner at the front of the church acknowledging that UUCCSM is a Welcoming Congregation.

DINING FOR DOLLARS

Melissa Weaver (Chair)

Melissa Weaver took over this year as Chair of Dining for Dollars, and Sue Moore assisted with the transition by playing a key role on the committee, as she has in past years. Pam Teplitz did the graphics work for the event roster, and Jasmine Chazelle created the "headers" with event information for the auction bid sheets. Bronwen Jones and Katie Malich helped with collections (and moral support!), and Sue Bickford is sending thank you notes to hosts after the events.

The auction was held on the last two Sundays in February, and the total amount of successful bids was just over \$32,000. As April 27, \$31,368 has been collected. Although some people back out after bidding, or have not paid as of this report, or have proven difficult to contact (including some

bidders who were not in the church database, which is an issue we need to address better in future), we anticipate collecting over \$32,000 ultimately. It is difficult to project the eventual total, because there are 4 "unlimited" events this year that people can attend without bidding, and the first one (the Grease movie sing-along) was very successful, with approximately \$700 in extra sales at the door, in addition to the auction bids.

We had fewer offerings this year (58) than last year (approx. 70), but the total raised was greater by about \$2,000. In terms of fellowship and community building, a total of 175 people were successful bidders, and the number of D4\$ participants may be even higher due to people who attend the "unlimited" events by paying at the door rather than bidding at the auction.

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Catherine Farmer Loya, (DRE)

This year has been one of exploration and transition, led in collaboration with the Lifespan RE Committee and the many dedicated volunteer teachers, assistants and additional helpers who make our congregation's educational ministry possible. In the 2012-13 year, we have continued to weave our monthly ministry themes into our programs at all levels, have offered new curricula and/or program models for several of our classes for children and youth, have engaged in multigenerational worship in the sanctuary for Ingathering, Day of the Dead, the Winter Holiday Pageant, Easter and LRE Sunday, have offered opportunities to put our hands and feet on our UU principles through Social Justice trips as well as on-site projects, and have expanded adult RE offerings that provide opportunities for members of our community to explore UU History, world religions, spiritual practices and our Jewish and Christian heritage

This spring, the LRE Committee and I have been working together to craft a vision for our programs in the next year as well as preparing for the summer RE programs as well as my time away on family leave from late May to mid-August. The program will be in very good hands with the LRE Committee as well as the professional support of Acting DRE during my leave, Emmalinda MacLean. I look forward to returning to UUCCSM in August with renewed energy as well as one very young new member of our RE program!

This has been an exciting year for our youth programs, with Our Whole Lives sexuality education classes offered for 8th-9th graders, with 14 participants and for 10th-12th graders, with 10 participants, as well as our Sunday-morning Coming of Age program for 8th grades and the Young Religious Unitarian Universalist (YRUU) youth group for 9th-12th graders. Our youth group in particular has grown this year, and we have an unprecedented number of youth – an even dozen – participating in this year's "big trip" to New Orleans for a week of hands-on service through the Center for Ethical Living and Social Justice Renewal's New Orleans Revitalization Project, housed at the First UU Church of New Orleans.

I have enjoyed working with our adult programs this year as well. In February and March I led a six-week class on UU History which with 14 participants who represented a wide cross-section of UUCCSM folks, with long-time members as well as newcomers. I anticipate offering a version of this class each year in the springtime, and next year we'll also be expanding our adult RE offerings for UU parents. I am so grateful to the many UUCCSM members who give their time and passion in support in our lifespan RE programs. It is hard to believe that this fall marks my tenth anniversary as your Director of Religious Education, but I remain so impressed with this congregation's willingness to travel with me as we try new ideas, new programs and new ways of "doing church," ensuring that the educational ministry of our congregation continues to be vibrant and responsive to the needs as well as the hopes and dreams of our members and friends of all ages. I cannot wait to see what our eleventh year together brings.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Beth Rendeiro and Barbara Gibbs, Co-chairs

Committee Members:

Carol Ring, Rhonda Peacock, Leonard Cachola, Barbara Gibbs, Kris Langabeer, Linda Van Ligten and, for part of the year, Claudia Dinkins

Support Team: *Wendi Gladstone & Men's Group*

The past twelve months have found the Membership Committee working together to streamline and develop the membership process at UUCCSM. We have focused on creating a welcoming, responsive and supportive approach to including and educating visitors and leading those who are interested down the path to membership. From April 2012 – April 2013 we welcomed 23 new members into our congregation. As of this writing membership stands at 369.

Below are listed the activities initiated and provided by the Membership Committee in 2012-2013.

- Sunday morning pre-service Greeters Program, of some 20 members, rotated on a weekly basis (1-3 at a time), serving at and around the Visitor's Welcome Table on the front patio. This group was chaired by *Barbara Gibbs*.
- Sunday morning Welcome Center Table, for meeting/greeting/informing visitors during the post-service coffee hour staffed by a rotation of committee members.
- Newcomer Orientations, chaired by Kris Langabeer, occurred monthly, on the first Sunday of each month

and included the minister, religious education director and Membership Committee personnel. Linda Van Ligten and Greg Wood generously provided the food for these events all year. Child care was provided.

- UU & You, informational gatherings for interested and potential new members, were held both in the fall and in the spring.
- New Member Recognition Services and receptions were planned, coordinated and facilitated both in the fall and in the spring.
- For the second year we hosted a successful Patio Supper for all new members at a committee member's home.
- A new membership packet was created with a clear process for a path to membership from visitor to member, including individual meetings with the minister

Welcome Bags for visitors have been designed and will be available soon

Sunday morning's Coffee/Cookie Hour, whose chairperson is *Nancy Howell*, falls under the purview of Membership and as such we supported the important services provided by Nancy and her service team.

We welcome your involvement with our committee and would appreciate any ideas or feedback you may have for the Membership Committee regarding improving our welcome and retention of visitors.

The Membership Committee greatly appreciates the ongoing support of *Reverend Rebecca Bijur, Catherine Farmer Loya DRE, administrator Nurit Gordon* and her staff, sextons *Tom Ahearn and Kevin Roller*, all who facilitated the effectiveness with which the Membership Committee worked to achieve its goals.



BOOKSTORE COMMITTEE

Nancy Babbitt

Although many people are going digital these days and reading and purchasing books online, in one way that is good for our bookstore because people have been donating lots of fantastic books. As a result, our shelves in Forbes Hall are overflowing with wonderful books on many subjects that originally cost upwards of \$20. Now our bookstore is mostly a Lending Library, although any book can still be purchased for as little as a dollar.

Also, we continue to carry and purchase books from the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) Bookstore for the Community Read and books emphasizing UU principles and philosophy.

We hope the bookstore adds a pleasant dimension to the church's coffee hour, giving people an opportunity to comfortably browse and chat with friends at the same time.

SMALL GROUPS MINISTRY PROGRAMS

Betty Barclay

Planning for the start of Small Group Ministry (SGM) at UCCSM began in early 2012. The meetings were attended by Rev. Rebecca, Rhonda Peacock and Betty Barclay. Emmy Cresciman attended the early meetings as a representative of the RE Committee.

We read about SGM using Robert Hill's *The Complete Guide to Small Group Ministry* as a resource and checked out online resources in addition to hearing about Rebecca's experience with SGM in other churches.

A timeline was developed to include recruiting facilitators for the facilitator training group, a retreat for the facilitators in September and monthly facilitator training meetings following the retreat. We also scheduled newsletter articles to let people know about SGM. Our plan included Mini Sessions on a Sunday in December to offer an opportunity for people to get a brief experience of what SGM would offer.

There was a good attendance at the Mini Sessions and when registration for the Small Group Meetings began the response was very positive, with about 100 people registered for the groups. At this time there are 10 groups meeting at various times each month, some daytime and some evening groups. The facilitators continue to meet monthly with Rebecca as the facilitator of their group.

The following, copied from our website, gives a good outline of the intent and format of the groups:

Small Group Ministry (SGM) is a new program at

UCCSM as of 2013. Small group ministry offers an opportunity to connect with others in the church who wish to explore their values and their ideas of

spirituality in an intimate setting and who wish to make a difference through service to the church and to the larger community.

Small group ministry programs are thriving all across the country in UU churches. They have been very successful in creating a true sense of community in UU churches, especially ones whose congregation has grown to the point where it is difficult to know everyone by Sunday morning attendance alone.

Each group:

- Meets monthly
- Has 8 to 10 members with a facilitator
- Follows a specific meeting structure
- Is bound by a covenant of interaction to which each member agrees
- Encourages listening as well as sharing on the part of each participant

The goal is to connect in a meaningful way with other members and friends of our church community. The spiritual and social connection, by which we measure our sense of belonging, is the purpose of the SGM program.

Often people seek a church community in order to find deeper meaning in their lives and to find relationships with others who share their values. For people new to the church community the groups offer an opportunity to form friendships with others and to more easily become involved with the church.

THE WOMEN'S ALLIANCE REPORT

Joyce Holman

In 1927 our church and our Women's Alliance were founded. For more than eight decades we, as an affiliated organization, have helped continue the living tradition by providing ordinary and extraordinary opportunities for leadership training, interesting programs, fundraising, worship, friendship, good food, community outreach, and personal growth; and we stayed connected to the UU Women's Federation, which used to be a membership association and now operates as a grant-giving organization (check it out at www.uuwf.org).

Would you like to get to know some amazing women?

What interests you most right now -- is it friends, spirituality, feminism, history, community service, stitchery, singing, poetry, or something else?

How could a women's group meet your needs for companionship, enrichment, service, music, balance, and fun ?

The Women's Alliance co-hosts with Interweave a festive annual picnic, welcoming folks of all ages. This year's picnic will be on July 28th so we hope to see you then.

ART WALL

Beverly Alison, Carol Ring, Nels Hanson

The Art Wall has been exciting, stimulating and varied this year. Upcoming is another June featuring the always exciting, talented children of our church. Planned for October is the highly regarded weaver, Michael Rohde, whose work is currently touring Europe to great acclaim. We will again feature the many Faith In Action activities during the month of July. November will focus on the art of Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe Artists' Collective will display their wide variety of creativity and strive to make human connections through their offerings.

We are exploring a couple of trips to studios and homes with unique collections and plan to mount shows both profound and inquisitive. Thanks for your support.

MEN'S GROUP

Phillip Bonacich

Our group has four complementary missions: to be a discussion group, a social group, a service group, and a support group. Most of our semi-monthly meetings are taken up with a pre-decided discussion topic relevant to the members. Occasionally we have social events (a Super Bowl party, for instance). We also intend to be of use to the church and the wider community through volunteer activities. Finally, we support each other in times of stress.

ORDER OF SERVICE & OFFICE ASSISTANT

Rima Snyder

As order of service assistant, my main jobs are to prepare the email announcements that go out on Thursday, and to prepare and print the order of service for each Sunday's services. I also do the orders of service for any memorial services that the church holds and for the Vespers evening services.

I maintain and update the online database for the email distribution list and enter the visitor information from each Sunday into the Church Windows database. I send the visitor information to the Membership Committee for follow up and post the announcements and orders of service to the church website.

As part of the preparation of the Sunday order of service I do a certain amount of layout and graphic design for the various "flyers" announcing activities and events. This can include working with RE and other groups/committees.

I send out a reminder to the volunteers every week: greeters, ushers, coffee servers, Sunday office volunteers

and book cart volunteers. This can include follow up with the committee coordinators if there are substitutions that week. I also send out a reminder to the RE volunteers each week and send confirmation to Catherine.

In addition I provide general office support by answering email requests and phone messages and working in the office on Thursday and Friday. Some of the work, including sending out the volunteer letter, I do from home. My current allotted hours are 12.5 hours per week.

fUUsion

Karen Hsu Patterson

fUUsion continues to be a vibrant group for younger adults aged 18-35+ in our congregation. fUUsion's email listserv has over 140 members, and our Facebook page has over 100 "likes". Both the listserv and the Facebook page continue to attract new people. fUUsion is a welcoming way to introduce new young adults (and potential members!) to UCCSM, and is a vital community for growing and nurturing connection and friendship.

fUUsion aims to host and sponsor social events, spiritual events, and service projects. While many events are aimed at younger adults at UUSM, several have been open to the wider UCCSM community as well.

Social activities have included group lunches after Sunday services, movie nights, potlucks, picnics, and more. For service to our wider community, we prepared and served dinner and sack lunches at Turning Point for the MLK Day of Service (January 2013). fUUsion also formed a team to fundraise and walk in AIDS Walk Los Angeles in support of healthcare and social services and programs for people affected by HIV/AIDS in Los Angeles (October 2012).

fUUsion and our members are active within the UCCSM community. We continue to staff the Welcome Table and greet visitors for the 11:00am service in months with a 5th Sunday. fUUsion also hosted a 2nd Sunday Supper (August 2012). Examples of other meaningful fUUsion member contributions to church life include: YRUU advising, ushering, serving coffee, and serving on various committees (such as Lifespan Religious Exploration, and Membership & Leadership, to name a few).

In addition, fUUsion is active in the Pacific Southwest District (PSWD). fUUsion members attended and helped to staff the annual PSWD Young Adult weekend at Camp de Benneville Pines (September 2012). fUUsion also frequently teams up with other UU young adults in the greater Los Angeles area for social events and spiritual events.

Future plans and ideas include connecting with and supporting the growing campus ministry at UCLA, a Soulful Sundown evening worship series, continued shared community with other UU young adults in the greater Los Angeles region, and continued outreach efforts through coffee hour, flyers, staffing at the Welcome Table, Facebook, and our listserv.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

**Abby Arnold, Chair, Lucy Hahn
Natalie Kahn, Amy Lacombe**

The Pledge Committee was established in October, 2012, replacing the Stewardship Committee, which no longer exists. For the 2013 pledge drive, the committee consisted of four members. Two members had previously served on the committee, and two members were recruited in October.

The committee planned and implemented the pledge drive during the usual pledge drive season, from October through the end of the year. This year the pledge drive activities included:

- a mailing to all members with pledge materials
- a kickoff brunch after both services on November 4
- pulpit messages throughout November, designed to encourage people to make a meaningful pledge to the church for the new year
- a table in Forbes Hall after each service to collect pledge cards and to answer questions about pledging
- a thank-you brunch after both services on December 9
- follow-up phoning by volunteers from throughout the congregation to anyone we hadn't heard from

The goal of the pledge drive was to raise \$400,000. As of 4/20/13, we are **\$24.38** short of that goal.

The Pledge Committee is in the process of designing the pledge drive for 2014. All four committee members have agreed to continue on the committee, so this year we will be able to do more thoughtful planning.

The committee is engaged in a process of self-education, evaluation and planning about how to increase the pledge income to the church so that the congregation can move toward an operating budget without a deficit. The options appear to be:

- increase the size of pledges from the 276 pledging units (households or individuals) in our congregation
- encourage more people who attend and participate in our church to become members and make an annual pledge
- attract more potential members to the church who will then be encouraged to join and pledge

There is no simple choice among these options, and we are planning to discuss the options with other key leadership in the congregation.

The Pledge Committee is very grateful to the congregation for its generosity, and to the Board and other volunteers who helped us in so many ways to achieve our goal.

LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

COMMITTEE

Emmy Cresciman

Last year was a transformative year for RE at UCCSM with the establishment of four subcommittees coordinating programs and events for children and adults of all ages and stages in our church. This year we reduced the number of subcommittees to three, with multigenerational activities being now coordinated by the entire Committee working together. Our visibility in the church continues to be enhanced by the presence of a weekly table in Forbes Hall staffed by committee members who answer questions about our programs and help with registration for classes. It's also a place where members of the congregation can voice opinions and make suggestions for new activities. The entire program is overseen by Director of Religious Education, Catherine Farmer Loya.

Each of the subcommittees consists of four members. On the first Tuesday of each month we meet briefly as a large group to discuss items affecting all subcommittees. Then we break into our smaller groups to brainstorm and plan the programs in our areas of interest, gathering again for a few minutes at the end of the evening with the whole group to summarize the results of our small group meetings. Thus, though each of us is involved in a subcommittee, the committee as a whole always has a connection to the big picture and we can cross-pollinate ideas and offer help to each other as needed.

Following are reports from each of these three subcommittees—Children, Youth, and Adults.

Lifespan RE – Children's Subcommittee

Nicole Henderson-MacLennan, Sabina Mayo-Smith, Susan Hendricks Richman, and

Kim Santiago-Kalmanson

The 2012-13 program year has been one of growth and exploration for the children's RE program, with the welcoming of new preschool staff member Roxanne Coleman Bell, new curricula in most of our classes, and lots of energy. The program is made possible by more than 40 UCCSM members who volunteer their time as teachers, assistants, event helpers, committee members and more.

In order to address developmental needs as well as balance out the size of our classes, this year's groupings included classes for Preschool-Kindergarten, 1st-2nd grades, 3rd-5th grades and 6th-7th grades. Our nursery continues to provide extremely high-quality care for infants, toddlers and young children up to age 3, thanks to the leadership of nursery supervisor ZaNyāa Lee.

In the Spirit Seekers class for 1st-2nd graders, we tried out a modification of the Spirit Play program model we've been using for a number of years, with each week's lesson centered around a story exploring the congregational ministry theme of the month on the first and second Sundays of the month, and a story designed to engage children in our UU history and traditions on the third Sunday. Following the story time, a hands-on craft or activity was offered for the class, rather than the individual work-time model used in previous years, and the feedback from children, parents and teachers about this change has been overwhelmingly positive. For next year we will continue with this program model, with minor tweaks to the class ritual to make it even more engaging for our young participants.

The UUniverse Story class for 3rd-5th graders, developed by UCCSM members Ian Dodd and Margot Page, continued into a second year with a hands-on, science-based curriculum organized around the overarching question, "How do we know what we know?" While last year's program focused on biology and exploring the very very small, this year the class sessions took participants outward and into the very very big world of cosmology, taking a look at the Big Bang and the origins of the Universe, the ways we are connected with stars and planets and all that we see when we look beyond the confines of our own earth.

And the Compass Points class for 6th-7th graders engaged participants in a yearlong spiritual journey with opportunities to explore their identities, their beliefs, their Unitarian Universalist faith, their relationships with others and their connections to the world.

We also offered six Faith in Action Sundays this year, engaging children and youth in acts of service to the larger community. Offsite trips included visits to the Westside Food Bank for a food sort and the Turning Point transitional housing shelter to prepare sack lunches for the residents, and we also compiled more than 150 hygiene kits and donations of clothing and other items for the homeless teen drop-in center at Common Ground, made doggy treats for donation to local animal shelters, and prepared the ground for this year's edible garden to be planted in the UCCSM courtyard.



Lifespan RE – Youth Subcommittee

Liza Cranis, Geoff Lee, Leon Henderson-MacLennan, and Nalani Santiago-Kalmanson

On Sunday mornings this year, the Coming of Age program for 8th graders provided opportunities for youth to learn who they are and where they are on their spiritual journey, celebrate their gifts, learn about the church and how it works, and articulate their own personal beliefs within the context of our UU faith. The program culminates on Coming of Age Sunday, May 19, with the presentation of the youths credo statements to the congregation and a special Coming of Age ceremony in a worship service of their own design.

The YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists) group for 9th-12th graders engaged teens in exploring what it means to be young and UU, how our UU principles inform how we live our lives, and what power young UU's have to change the world. YRUU also took part in social justice projects, social gatherings, and led a Sunday worship service for the congregation in April. The group is currently preparing to travel to New Orleans from June 29-July 6 for a week of hands-on service through the Center for Ethical Living and Social Justice Renewal's New Orleans Revitalization Project, housed at the First UU Church of New Orleans. This will be our biggest trip ever, with eleven youths and six adult advisors participating, and fundraising efforts are underway to help our big group get to NOLA.

Under the guidance of Beth Rendeiro, the Our Whole Lives sexuality education program continues to be a vital element of our congregation's educational ministry. This year we offered 8th-9th grade O.W.L. with 14 participants and 10th-12th grade O.W.L. with 10 participants.

Lifespan RE – Adult Subcommittee

Emmy Cresciman, Karen Hsu Patterson, Carol-Jean Teuffel, and James Witker.

Our year began on a sad note with the death of subcommittee member and long-time RE participant Judy Federick. Judy's pet project for the year was to launch a series of visits to various faith communities in our area for adults in the congregation. We carried on with her vision and in March, led by Karen Hsu Patterson and James Witker, visited the local Sikh ashram in Culver City for a Sunday prayer service followed by lunch with the community. Future trips are in the planning stages.

One of our proudest accomplishments of the past year has been the development of collaborative relationships with other groups in the church. We have joined together to present events, activities and workshops with Faith in Action (three discussion series led by Rick and Peggy Rhoads on "The New Jim Crow"), AAHS (special guest lectures), DeBenneville Pines Committee, and Saturday Spotlight (on Sunday). We look to the congregation for suggestions for future workshops, activities and events. Stop by the Lifespan Table in Forbes Hall on any Sunday, or contact one of our committee members listed above.

We hope to continue to strengthen the bonds of community within our congregation with these kinds of partnerships moving forward.

New ongoing programs this year include a support group for "Empty Nesters" led by parent educator Linda Marten, and the Wednesday Night Writers spearheaded by Bettye Barclay, and we have continued with our popular monthly themed "patio chats" led by Leon Henderson-MacLennan. We'll round out the year in June with a 2-session discussion of John Buehrens' book "Understanding the Bible" led by James Witker in June.

FAITH IN ACTION COMMISSION

Rick Rhoads

Much of what FIA does is accomplished by the committees that operate under its umbrella: the Peace & Social Justice Committee, the Green Living Group, Interweave, and the Hunger Task Force. In addition to the activities described in their reports, FIA has done the following in the past 12 months:

In conjunction with the three book discussion groups we've led on *The New Jim Crow*, the UUA's common read this year, and in alliance with the Committee for Racial Justice (which meets in the Church in Ocean Park), we showed *The House I Live In* Jan. 12, a documentary about the failure of the War on Drugs. One hundred sixty people came to the showing; it was SRO in Forbes Hall. Many in the audience were people who had not been to our church before; we're working to help make UCCSM a community center for opposing racism and fighting for social justice.

April 14 saw a presentation in our Sanctuary by the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, focused once again on the issue of mass incarceration, the War on Drugs, and the fight to stop the building of more prisons and to make policy changes that result in fewer people incarcerated.

FIA was responsible for the Art Wall in July; we use the annual show to highlight the activities of FIA and our committees and as one more way to encourage congregants to act on the last words they hear every Sunday before entering Forbes Hall: "Our worship is ended; our service begins."

Once again this year we held a craft sale to raise money for FIA. Feb. 17 we held the annual FIA Town Hall meeting, where we describe what our committees are doing and solicit suggestions from members and friends about future activities. Guest speakers at the meeting were Bridie Roberts of CLUE-LA, who spoke about the CLEAN Carwash Campaign and the past, present and future fight for living wages in Santa Monica hotels, and Christina Fialho of C.I.V.I.C., about the local and national campaign to visit immigrants being held in detention centers while awaiting hearings.

The FIA chairperson is also an advisor to YRUU this year; he arranged for a carwash worker to come to a YRUU session and describe what it is like to work in a carwash and other aspects of his life.

A relatively new member of UCCSM is an environmental toxicologist who is helping residents of Culver City and other areas adjacent to the oil fields of Baldwin Hills fight to stop hydraulic fracturing (fracking), which is endangering the health of residents, including many members of our congregation. We plan to have educational programs about fracking at UCCSM, and encourage our members and friends to get involved in this struggle.

To publicize our activities, we've staffed a table in Forbes Hall after both services and submitted many articles to the church newsletter.

MUSIC COMMITTEE AND MUSIC DEPARTMENT REPORT

**Rima Snyder, Rob Briner, DeReau K. Farrar,
Director of Music.**

Our new Director of Music, DeReau Farrar, has done a wonderful job of increasing confidence and ability within the choir. The choir has performed a variety of new and challenging pieces and members of the congregation have responded with many positive comments. The choir currently has three paid section leaders;

VanNessa Hulme, soprano; Gabriel Paredes, tenor, and Babatunde (Bobby) Akinboboye, baritone. We have been able to retain all three due to a generous bequest to the music program. DeReau has scheduled a fundraising concert in May featuring the section leaders, which will go directly toward their salaries for the next church year. The section leaders have been an important part of building a strong choral sound and have provided a lot of the small ensemble music for both the 9am and 11am services.

DeReau has established a new position, Assistant

Director of Music, which replaces the position of church organist. Dr. Irene Gregorio-Stoup was appointed to the position last fall and has been a great addition to our staff. Some of her most basic responsibilities include providing service music, accompanying the choir and guest musicians, as necessary, and serving as Director of Music in DeReau's absence.

We also have a new organ tuner, Roger Daggy, who is helping to restore the organ to full working order after a period of some neglect. Mr. Daggy played an organ recital last February with a good will offering which went toward supporting the music program.

The choir has taken part in additional services for In-gathering, Day of the Dead, Christmas, and Easter, and is involved in outreach programs with other churches including the installation service for Rev. Rick Hoyt at First Church in March and the Pacific Southwest District UU Choral festival in May.

The annual Dining for Dollars choir concert, " America Singing: Patriotism vs. Pride" will be held in June and will highlight music that examines different aspects of the American experience.

The new website has been a huge improvement and Liz Fuller is working to make it more efficient in terms of posting music events. There was a vocal workshop in April with Moira Smiley, in exchange for her previous use of the hall. This was a free event to church members, and proved to be very popular, as in times past. This, along with DeReau's participation in the weekend camp at DeBenneville last year, is a step toward achieving the goal of involving the congregation as a whole in our music program.

The Music Department has requested no budget increase for FY14. This is not to say that the fiscal demands of the music department are not steadily increasing. In fact, there is still a long way to go in order to get the program back to its pre-Recession strength. However, DeReau believes the program can shoulder a lot of the responsibility for its own growth. In this way, when the time comes to ask for more support from the church's operating budget, there will be a proven sense of what the annual needs are. In the meantime, we have requested permission to raise our own funding in order to support such planned growth.

To close, a little Cummings... "may my heart always be open to little/birds who are the secrets of living/ whatever they sing is better than to know/and if men should not hear them men are old..."

GREEN LIVING COMMITTEE

**Jessica Clay, Beth Brownlie and
Alison Kendall co-chairs**

The Green Living Committee strives to continue the focus of UUCCSM on being Green and Sustainable.

We will research and then propose sustainability goals for the Church community and help staff, members and the Community as a whole attain those goals.

The Green committee continues to advise the Facilities Committee on sustainable and green measures to be employed during upgrades to the facilities including the following; 1. The new roof is more efficient at insulating the sanctuary, 2. Insulation was put in regularly occupied staff areas, 3. old material from roof was diverted from a landfill and recycled, 4. Both roof materials are made from recycled material and 5. 3 new Solar tubes natural light sources were installed in office areas, reducing need for artificial lighting. This year we plan for more sustainable measures to be executed including LED lighting and efficient windows and doors in office areas.

We meet as needed.

We prepared, planted and maintained a vegetable, herb garden with the help of RE and YRUU in 2012 and will continue this annual tradition this year.

We continue to have a sustainable Food event, 2nd Sunday Supper, focusing on vegetarian cooking and local cooking and ethical eating. This year we had a movie, Fork over Knives which focuses on being plant strong and eliminating animal products from the diet, a healthful and sustainable practice.

We continue to support the Energy Upgrade program (Alison Kendall) promoting members to improve their homes to be more energy efficient. Donations from the state are given to the church when a member does the upgrade. 7 UUCSSM families have participated in this program.

We continue our efforts to support local earth centered charities with our generous non-pledge offering during the month April (Earth Month). This year was Tree-People.

SECOND SUNDAY SUPPER

Beth Rendeiro

Second Sunday Supper is a lovely way for people to share in cooking and conversation while getting to know other UU members in a relaxed, convivial atmosphere. This past year rotating committees sponsored most of the Second Sunday Suppers; a service to our community. Thank you to all of you who participated as hosts and guests.

The sponsoring committee is responsible for providing an entree for approximately 40 persons. Last year, for example, we had lasagna, pizza, veggie night, Mexican night, etc. and usually over 35 persons showed up bearing side dishes, wine and desserts. The cost of the entree is borne by the committee members. The hope is to continue to grow the number of participants at the suppers each year, and include all ages, families, singles, couples and guests. We suggest committees dovetail the Sunday Supper with any events or activities the committee is considering, or would like to suggest.

This past church year participating committees included:

- May 2012: Peace and Social Justice Committee
- June 2012: Pot Luck
- July 2012: Long Range Planning Committee
- August 2012: fUUsion
- September 2012: Membership and Leadership
- October 2012: No sponsor
- November 2012: Green Committee
- December 2012: Lifespan RE Committee
- January 2013: No sponsor: potluck
- February 2013: No sponsor: potluck
- March 2013: Small Group Ministry Facilitators
- April 2013: Finance Committee
- May 2013: Coming of Age Team

Thank you so very much for your participation in what has become one of the most popular social events at UUCSM.

If you are a member of a committee that would like to sponsor a Second Sunday Supper beginning in June 2013 please contact either Beth Rendeiro: Rendeiro2@aol.com or Kate Schelsinger: katethomas56@aol.com.

FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Bryan Oakes and Beth Brownlie co-chairs

The FDC strives to continue the efforts of the New Building Committee which was responsible for the renovation of Forbes Hall in 2009/2010.

Active Members include: Tom Hamilton, Rev. Rebecca Benefiel Bijur, Cynthia Cottam, Nurit Gordon, Karl Lisovsky, and Alison Kendall.

- We continue to add details and features and make the New Forbes Hall completely functional and safe for all Community Members and Staff.
- We provide expert opinions on measures to be taken to complete small building projects.
- We advise the Church Community and Staff on sustainable on building/repairs on the Facilities.
- We research and then propose sustainability goals for the Church community and help staff, members and the Community as a whole attain those goals.
- We meet twice monthly.

This Year:

- We completed a structural analysis of the Sanctuary with the result being that we could not place tiles on the lower portion without significant structural repairs to the church which were cost prohibitive. We completed the roofing project with two-piece mission tiles on the higher roof and asphalt tiles on the lower roof.
- We installed 4 Solatube/skylights in the offices reducing the need for electric illumination.
- We also installed a security key pad on the Arizona entry door. This provides flexibility of the Forbes Classrooms for Rentals.

CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP

Joyce Holmen and Helen Brown

Caregivers find themselves responsible for a host of medical, social, personal, legal, and practical details to keep a loved one safe and as healthy and happy as possible. It's very hard to do that. Caregivers provide comfort and explanations and reassurance, make appointments, decide when to call 911, learn to reassemble hearing aids and walkers, do complex medication management as well as laundry, prepare food and encourage a loved one to eat it, shop all over to find special things that make a difference, make transportation arrangements for someone with a disability, adjust to psychological factors and relationship changes, manage money and insurance paperwork and plumbing and yard work, handle oxygen equipment, get the taxes prepared and paid, and valiantly try to do the endless lists of tasks that need to be done, often for years, often with little respite.

If compassion is a muscle, then caregivers exercise it a whole lot. According to the Dalai Lama, "Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive."

Have you somehow become a caregiver? Being responsible for providing care for a chronically ill family member or friend can be alternately depressing, isolating, rewarding, frustrating, and overwhelming.

A group of people with experiences similar to yours might help you both deal with day-to-day problems and maintain your own life and health. Need to cope with round-the-clock care for a spouse or parent, part-time care, moving, monitoring things long-distance, or stepping forward in a crisis? Members of our Caregivers' Support Group have developed expertise in taking care of loved ones with various situations including Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes, cancer, depression, heart problems -- at home, in assisted living or rehab or a nursing home, and in hospice care.

Our small, encouraging group has been meeting for over a dozen years, with people coming and going as their needs change. And our minister checks in with us occasionally with her kind and wise presence. We hope to keep being available for caregivers in our church community. Meetings are on the 3rd Tuesday morning of the month, but we invite you to talk with us whether you can attend meetings or not.

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Nurit Gordon

The 2012-13 fiscal year was a busy year. Goals for supporting the Church and its members in fulfilling its purpose in the community and maintaining the facility included upgrading the buildings and grounds, creating office procedures and logistics for recurring items and activities, and improving efficiency without affecting the quality of the work we do in the office. We are lucky to have Helen Brown and Peggy Kharraz as our office volunteers, they are a valued part of the office staff; they come in once a week each, for a few hours, and help with mailings, phones and any other tasks we need help with. Nancy Thompson, our Administrative and Finance Assistant came aboard last May and has been a great addition and asset to our office staff.

FINANCES

We set up on-line payment option on our website which saves us time and paperwork at the office.

We were able to keep within budget with all office and administration expenses and so far spent less money than budgeted. We did that by trying to recruit members when we need help in different areas whenever possible, we also try to save when ordering office supplies and already saving postage and paper when we reduced the Newsletter mailings from 260 to 130 each month, promoting the electronic newsletter.

Financial auditing was conducted in October and all financial records and procedures were found well organized and up to date.

FACILITY and RENTALS

During the summer we installed a new irrigation system, a new door mechanism at the Arizona Lobby and a new security pad at the Arizona door. We also installed skylights in the Minister's office and Front Office to improve the lighting in and eliminate the use of light fixtures in both offices during the day. The Minister's office was especially dark during the day and artificial lighting was always required.

The skylights, on top of bringing the natural light in, save us money in electricity bills. The "Ghost Lights" in the Sanctuary which were turning on and off on their own for months were finally fixed by Warren Matthews. It took a while to find out what the problem was but after replacing some switches and re-wiring, we no longer find the Sanctuary lights turned on at odd times during the day.

The new security pad enabled us to increase rentals in Forbes Building. On top of the 12-step groups (about 20) we have a few spiritual groups and classes meeting here on regular basis. During the Winter Break due to the fact Santa Monica College did not provide classes, we had a few adult art classes taking place at the church. As a result of the above and with Nancy Thompson's working with the renters, trying to accommodate all, our group rentals income has increased by

30%. Most of our rooms in Forbes and the Cottage are rented to recurring groups but we also have groups renting rooms for short period of times from 4-10 weeks at a time.

We always keep in mind that church activities and meetings are a priority and do our best to avoid scheduling conflicts.

The leaking roof was finally replaced with the help of generous contributions from members as well as a grant received from the Spirit Level Foundation. Bryan Oakes and Beth Brownlie worked very hard to bring it all together. The work took less time than we predicted and was finished in two weeks without too many interruptions to the office, the staff and to church life.

We also planted new trees in the back alley, recoated the cottage floor and two of our members planted succulents at the Arizona entry resulting in a beautiful landscape at that entry.

During the month of December we cleaned up and organized all the closets and cabinets in the Administration Offices.

HR

The revised Personnel Policy Manual was published in April 2013 after months of editing by the HR Committee led by Denise Helton; it was distributed to all employees after it was approved by the Board.

We have established new hiring procedures to ensure all required paperwork is submitted in a timely manner and is in place.

MISC

New office procedures were established: tracking prospective new members and scheduling meetings with the minister. We have created new procedure for the administration of Thank you letters for special contributions, logistics and timeline lists for repeating events and activities such as Holiday Services, Annual and Congregational meetings, money collection are now all recorded and can be used each time the event/activity takes place.

Special thanks to Greg Wood and Dan Kegel for helping us with IT issues this year.



NEWSLETTER REPORT

Charles Haskell, editor-in-chief

The Newsletter Team consists of the following volunteers:

Editors: Laura Eklund, Elizabeth Fuller, Nels Hanson (July to November), Joyce Holmen, Geralyn Lambson, Karen Mathews, Rima Snyder, Carol-Jean Teuffel, Jennifer Westbay

- Calendar: Laura Eklund
- Art Directors: Dayla McDonald (July to November), Carol Ring, Pam Teplitz
- Photographer: Charles Haskell
- Distribution: Elizabeth Fuller (electronic edition), Peggy Kharraz (paper edition)

The primary function of the newsletter is to inform the congregation and visitors of church issues, programs, and activities by producing a monthly newsletter. We note the following activities and accomplishments during the last year.

- We have been encouraging members to access and read the monthly newsletter online. The office has been urging online access for all new members with email addresses and the newsletter itself has been promoting electronic access. Thanks to these efforts we have reduced the number of mailed hard copy newsletters from about 260 in August 2011 to about 147 now. We print an additional 50 newsletters each month for distribution at church.
- Online access to the newsletter occurs in two forms on our website — a public page containing about 80% of the content, and a members-only version in PDF form. There are 990 people on our uusm-news mailing list who receive a monthly courtesy notice that a new newsletter is available on our website. There are currently between 150 and 200 UUCCSM website users with member-level accounts who can view the members-only version of the newsletter if they wish to. The public pages are public, accessible to anyone, anywhere, who would like to look at them at any time.
- There was continued evolution of our staff this last year. After many years of service as editor-in-chief and serving as one of our art directors, Dayla McDonald resigned to pursue new activities. Nels Hanson also resigned his post as one of our editors. We're pleased to note the addition of a new editor, Karen Mathews.
- Charles Haskell is completing a two-year term as editor-in-chief. The Newsletter Team has asked him to serve another two-year term. He has agreed, subject to board approval.
- The Newsletter team met twice during the year to review our Style Sheet and overall procedures.

- The Newsletter team reviewed the current Newsletter policy as published on our church's website. It is quite outdated and needs revision. We have drafted a new Newsletter policy and submitted it to the board for review and possible approval. The new policy creates a Newsletter Committee, which will consist of the current members of the Newsletter Team. Salient features of the proposed policy can be summarized as follows: The Newsletter Committee is responsible for production of the newsletter, including making reasonable discretionary decisions relating to content and design. The committee chooses its own editor-in-chief to serve for a two-year term (July to June), subject to approval by the Board of Directors. Space and emphasis in the newsletter is allocated according to priorities that are available on request. All newsletter items should be emailed to **newsletter@uusm.org** by noon on the 15th of the month. Articles received by this deadline are published, provided they are considered appropriate material for the newsletter. Articles received after the deadline may or may not be published, depending on available space and whether the material can be added to the issue without disrupting our publication schedule. The editor-in-chief may edit material for length, style, grammar, etc., and refuse material that is not appropriate. Literary contributions are not accepted. Any questions or problems concerning the newsletter should be addressed to the editor-in-chief. All material published is copyrighted and is the property of the Church.





