

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF VENTURA

2016-17

ANNUAL REPORT

PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

JUNE 11, 2017



Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura

5654 Ralston Street, Ventura, CA 93003

805-644-3898

www.uuventura.org

IN MEMORIAM

KAY FELTON

1920 - 2016

THEA MARCH

1942 - 2016

CONSUELO HERNANDEZ

1928 - 2016

HAL KUFELDT

1920 - 2017

SINCLAIR WALL

1929 - 2017

LYNN WEEKS

1936 - 2017

KIM PETERSON

1961 - 2017

2016-17 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President Bryan Buck

Vice President Chuck Samonsky

Secretary.....Vel Linden-Akseven

TreasurerJim Waldron

Trustee at Large Kimberly Prieto

Trustee at Large Katherine (Kassy) Erickson

Trustee at Large Mark Gale

Annual Report produced
by Gretchen Buck
with assistance from many others

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FROM OUR MINISTER

As you are coming to know, I love a good paradox, so this report will reflect on a paradox that ran through our first year together as minister and congregation. It's a paradox that always rests at the heart of the church and the individual spiritual life – as any paradox worth its salt will do.

In one of my first sermons, I spoke of how new beginnings can prompt us to start new initiatives. Yet congregations have an ebb and flow, and I sensed that folks at church were a little tired. “Perhaps rather than jumping right into new initiatives, maybe it would be better to rest, take a breath, look around, take stock.” There was an almost audible breathing out as I watched many of your shoulders relax. I had touched on something deep, a yearning for rest and rejuvenation. “Slow church” someone (on the board I think) named it.

Just three months later, Rev. Anne Hines led a Start Up Workshop with nearly 30 congregational leaders. We talked the hopes and expectations of our new ministry together. We came up with a list of goals for the year. Rev. Anne suggested a maximum of 2 or 3. We had 10, listing 5 of them as top priorities. You will see our paradox built into them.

Top Three

- Hire a new DRE
- Successful resolution of the Homeless/Safe Sleep Task Group
- Budget Long-Range Planning

Two Highly Important

- Step Back-Balcony View, refocus – “Slow church”
- Hire new Office Administrator – analyze staffing needs

Already in Process

- Make sure Dana gets off to a good start
- Leadership Development
- Fix acoustics in the Sanctuary, replace the speakers
- Outdoor Sanctuary

So how exactly do we take on so many initiatives while doing slow church? And of course, there was an election, which gave us a heightened sense of urgency.

So here is my sense of what we have accomplished this year – from our list and beyond and not exactly in order.

Our ministry together feels like it has gotten off to a grand start. The installation in February felt like a powerful beginning, an acknowledgement of a covenanted relationship of depth and meaning.

We have hired a new director of religious education, Emily Carroll, and a new office administrator, Jennifer Seale.

The Safe Sleep and Homelessness Task Group completed its work with a report to the Board of Trustees. The board reaffirmed UUCV's commitment to the program, with some policies and procedures yet to iron out. There has been some healing work among people at the center of the conflict, with plans to take it to a wider group.

The board and the Finance Committee worked closely on budgeting, aided by a new Stewardship Team and a successful pledge drive. Significant deficits need addressing in future budgets, requiring more long-range planning.

The Leadership Development Committee and I had a leadership discernment training attended by 9 members.

The Outdoor Sanctuary project will come up for congregational vote at the annual meeting. Financial commitments have already doubled the catalyzing gift.

There are plans for improving sanctuary acoustics, which will probably be realized in the 2017-2018 year.

We have a vibrant new group of Pastoral Associates.

So we have done most or all on our list. Have we slowed down church? Have we stood on the balcony, watching and discerning enough? Probably not quite enough. And yet this remains always an on-going dynamic in church.

Best of all to me is what a great start we are off to together. That alone is enough for me! I remain almost giddily happy serving this amazing congregation.

*With love and gratitude,
Rev. Dana*

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

In this first year of serving as your Board President, I want to thank everyone for all that you do, both the big and the small. The efforts of creating a beloved community do not go unnoticed. It is a privilege to serve, and I appreciate the support that you have given not only to the Board but to all who participate in the life of the congregation in leadership capacities.

This was the year of transitions. The most important of these is that the Congregation entered into a new relationship with Rev. Dana Worsnop as our Minister. The installation of Rev. Dana on February 19th completed a process begun last year with the Search Committee. Among the many dignitaries in attendance was the Rev. Bill Sinkford, past president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, who provided the Sermon for this wonderful celebration.

In addition, we completed our journey with Staff changes. After many years of service, we are saying goodbye to our Office Administrator, Becky Burnham. Her contributions are numerous and our gratitude for her work and presence among us in creating community is beyond measure. We wish Becky the very best in her retirement. At the time of writing this report the hiring of Becky's replacement was in process but had not yet been completed.

Emily Caroll was hired as our new Director of Religious Education and will start in August. Emily brings many talents and much experience in working with children. We are very grateful to the R.E. Committee, Joyce Faber who served as our acting interim DRE, and the countless volunteers who worked to maintain programming demonstrating commitment to our children in their spiritual development.

The Safe Sleep and Homeless Task Group, chaired by Carolyn Briggs, completed their work. This was a deeply meaningful process that resulted in the Board approving policy that affirms the Safe Sleep program as an official ministry of this congregation.

The Ad-Hoc Committee on Major Maintenance made recommendations on how that fund should be managed; these are among the items to be voted on by the congregation at this year's Annual Meeting.

Our Sunday Services are full, and we continue to show ourselves to be a welcoming congregation for those seeking a spiritual home. We are following through on a bold financial path that started with last year's budget. We are fortunate to have reserves, acquired via good stewardship, that will help us with our budget for the next several years as we continue to find ways to grow our presence in Ventura.

Finally, there are so many people to thank for their contributions to our church that to name all would be to name every member and friend of the UUCV. The giving of your time, talent and treasure is the glue of the community we create and share. We have grown in our generosity and in our relationships. Consequently, we have grown as a church.

Keep on moving forward!

Bryan Buck, Board President

ENRICHING OUR SHARED LIVES

CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Many members of the UUCV community volunteered in RE this year; our thanks to those listed here and all the other helpers as well.

Interim Director of Religious Education (DRE): Joyce Faber (through March 2017)

Assistant DRE: Janice Frank

Religious Education Committee: Erica Duffy, Rena Pezutto, Vel Linden, Mina Nichols, Gina Norstedt, Doug Tate

Infant/Toddler Room Aides: Sidia Anderson, Lupe Cisneros, Michelle Hineson

Teachers:

Pre-K – 1st Grade: Laurie Lemson, Cheryl Gilbert, Katie Turner, Geri Woodson
Substitutes: Irma Sixby, Krista Mendelsohn

2nd - 5th Grade: Mary Kay Lambert, Lauren Copus, David Smith, Jeff Steve
Substitutes: Kathy Swift, Phoebe Higgins, Annette Gale, Carol Simmons

6th - 8th Grade: Chris C de Baca, Mike Pezzuto, Rita Newman, Marge & Ken Lorraine
Substitutes: Mina Nichols, Ray Vargas, Gina Norstedt

Music: Sally King

Event Volunteers: Kappy Paulson, Dorothy Fasthorse, Marjorie Lorraine, David Henkel, Mina Nichols, Rita Newman

Upcoming in 2017-2018:

August 1st 2017, our newly-hired Director of Religious Education, Emily Carroll, will join us at UUCV!

Rena Pezutto and Gina Norstedt will co-chair the RE Committee

WORSHIP

No report has been submitted as of June 5, 2017.

CHOIR

This year's regular choir membership was 21. In addition to singing bi-monthly at services, the choir sang for the installation of Reverend Dana. They led a Christmas Eve family service, had a Fall choir retreat and end of the year picnic.

SOPRANOS

Roseanna Bellino-Strickland
Jennifer Carver
Janice Dallas
Susan Franzblau
Erin Merrill
Madelaine Okano
Sally Sibley-King

ALTOS

Susan Brinkmeyer
Silvia Hutchins
Xina Kingshill
Shirlee Morton
Kathy Swift

TENORS

Janice Frank
Jim Merrill
Mary Nelson
Neal Ortenberg
Ron Stewart

BASSES

Dennis Ashly
Kent Brinkmeyer
Harold Dale
Cartlidge
Geoffrey Dann

Carolyn Howard, Music Director

CARING COMMITTEE

Our Caring Committee members are the greatest: Corine Barksdale, Marcy Burns, Phoebe Higgins, Jon Larimore, Harriet McNamara, Yukio Okano, Gina Norstedt, Barbara Paarmann, Diane Walmsley and Sylvia Wikholm. Thanks also to the steadfast kitchen crew, Shelah Wilgus, Janette and Juan.

This year, the Committee assisted at the receptions of the following memorial services:

Kay Felton, August 20, 2016
Thea March, September 17, 2016
Consuelo Hernandez, October 2, 2016
Hal Kufeldt, December 10, 2016
Lynn Weeks, November 12, 2016
Kim Peterson, February 11, 2017

The Committee also assisted at the reception for the Installation of Rev. Dana Worsnop on February 19, 2017.

As well, the Committee sends cards to those who are ill or grieving the loss of a loved one.

Committee members may call those in need of occasional meals or rides as requested. The Committee provides finger foods at wedding receptions as well.

Madelaine Okano
Caring Committee Coordinator

MEMBERSHIP

Watch out - there is a Membership Manager in the house! This has been the first full year that UUCV has had a Membership Professional on staff. A very active year!

My job description could be defined as “coming alongside”. It is a ministry of companionship. Companionship of the Visitor, the New Member, and being attentive to current Members.

My key collaborators this year have been:

- the Membership Committee (*Gudrun Eastham, Kathy Swift, Anne Escobedo, Silvia Hutchins and Ray Vargas*);
- the Covenant Group Steering Committee (*Jim and Pam Waldron and Gina Norstedt*);
- the Adult Programs Coordinating Team (*Xenia Young and Annette Gale*);
- Reverend Ed Brock and Reverend Dana Worsnop.

Great to collaborate with you!

Some highlights of my role as Membership Manager this year (listed loosely in chronological order):

- Joined Unitarian Universalist Association of Membership Professionals
- Continued interfacing with the Membership Committee (had begun in 2014)
- “Guest News” publication created and emailed monthly to 60+ Guests
- Made personal contact to Visitors within 48 hours after visit
- Newcomer Chats created and hosted with Membership Committee
- Pathway to Membership Orientations enhanced to include a Signing of the Membership Book Celebration prior to New Member Sunday
- Lead the forming of the Covenant Group Program (see below)
- Facilitated the Adult and Religious Education Programs (see below)

New Members and Guests:

UUCV welcomed 14 new members. The average number of Guests each Sunday was eight – and peaked the Sunday after the November election.

Integration and Retention:

Roy Oswald, from the Alban Institute, says that you have to make six friends in the first six months or you won't stay in a church. Small groups are one of the best ways to cultivate connection and friendships.

The **Covenant Group** Pilot Program was launched in Spring 2016. Six co-facilitators were trained and three Covenant Groups met from February to July 2016. The Covenant Group Steering Committee (Jim and Pam Waldron and Gina Norstedt) was formed in early Fall 2016. Teaming with Reverend Dana and the Steering Committee, additional co-facilitators were trained and three new groups began meeting from February through July 2017.

Adult Programs and Spiritual Growth Programs combined to be under one umbrella called “Adult Programs”. The Adult Programs Coordinating Team (APCT) was formed and includes Beverly Jordan, Xenia Young and Annette Gale. An infrastructure is being designed with the goal of strengthening the Adult Programs offered. The lay leadership is to be commended for their strong work in leading the many adult programs at UUCV.

Adult Religious Education Classes were offered:

- Dr Bill Garlington taught an Islam Series
- Reverend Carolyn Price facilitated a small group class on the book “Being Mortal” by Atal Gawande and a series “Building Your Own Theology”.
- In May 2017, Reverend Dana taught *Our American Roots – a UU History class*.

Congregational growth is about many things. Four ways that congregations grow are:

- **Numerical**—the number of people attending worship and programs, or number of members;
- **Maturational**—the spiritual maturity of each member;
- **Organic**—a congregation's ability to maintain its health and engage the world; and
- **Incarnational**—being real and living our values in the world.

From where I sit, UUCV is in a growth spurt!

The **Membership Committee** continues to work enthusiastically in tandem with Beverly Jordan, Membership Manager, and our newly settled minister, the Rev Dana Worsnop, presenting vibrant *Pathway to Membership* Orientation Workshops three times a year. These workshops are open to anyone wishing to learn more about Unitarian Universalism, our church history and congregation but are required for those seeking membership in our church. As workshop attendees begin to decide for themselves that they wish to join our congregation, Committee, Beverly and Dana stage a New Member Celebration where the Membership Book is signed, pledge cards are received, Board of Trustees are introduced while enjoying refreshments and the sharing of personal stories. This year's workshops brought a wonderful result in 14 new Members and 9 Pledging Friends.

A New Member Recognition Ceremony occurs during a Sunday Worship Service where a freshly worded New Member Litany is spoken. In 2017, our children have been invited to remain in the Sanctuary to witness this ceremony. New members are offered permanent nametags, blue ribbon leis with enamel chalice pins to indicate further connection to our congregation; their photos and bios are displayed on the New Member Bulletin Board in Berg Hall. Another newly implemented activity for newcomers and visitors are the "Newcomer Chats," hosted by Beverly and Membership Committee members, where guests are given more detailed information about our Sunday Worship Services, what some of our traditions and rituals mean, and are treated to a mini-tour of our building and light refreshments.

The Membership Committee continues to schedule and train the Greeter Team and provide Welcome Table and Visitor Information Table attendants who offer radical hospitality to all who enter our building. Visitors are offered paper name tags and Visitor Packets, are invited to sign the Guest Book, and are sought out for conversation after Worship Services. Working with Rev Dana, the Worship Associates, and the collection Counters, the Greeters are now taking the offering bags to the chancel for a Blessing. This new ritual helps focus on the offering recipients and minimizes distractions during the Worship Service. The Membership Committee Chair attends monthly meetings with Worship Associates, writes a monthly newsletter column and convenes a monthly committee meeting. The UUCV Membership Committee strives to connect not only with newcomers but with all members in the congregation, and is always open to adding new volunteers to the Greeter Team and the committee itself.

Submitted by Gudrun Eastham, Chair

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The 2015-2016 members of the Leadership Development Committee: Katie Turner, Chair; Gary Zinik, Kathy Swift, Kappy Paulson, and Stephanie Tiffany, members.

This year our committee:

- Interviewed board members whose terms were expiring to create a full picture of what board experience was like.
- Successfully filled all board and Leadership Development Committee slots before the 60-day deadline in our Bylaws.
- Worked with other committees on their leadership needs and discussed leadership opportunities with members of our congregation.
- Supported lay leadership by paying some fees associated with going to District and General assembly.
- Featured lay leaders in the leadership column in the On Common Grounds newsletter.

Katie Turner, Leadership Development Chair

MINISTRY AND OPERATIONS TEAM (MOT)

In the first year of her ministry with us, Reverend Dana has been discerning how best to use the resource of the standing Ministry and Operations Team. The team has met with Rev. Dana on an as-needed basis to consult about issues important to the church's operation. The Board has also tasked MOT members to participate in ad hoc activities such as a task force to develop definitions of major maintenance and capital improvements and the Safe Sleep and Homeless Task Group. The Board turns to MOT to draft language for adoption as policy or procedure.

This year saw founding MOT member Dorothy Wootan replaced by Carolyn Briggs as a lay member of MOT along with Jim Merrill.

NEWSLETTER

On Common Ground, the 10-page newsletter of the UU church of Ventura is published monthly and available in full color on the church website.

We thank the many contributors to our monthly newsletter. Co-editors Shelah Wilgus and Tessa Weeks are ably assisted by proofreader Harriet McNamara. The newsletter is also available as hard copy upon request.

A small group of people take care of mailing the hard copy of the newsletter. They put them together, fold, stamp, label and take them to the Post Office. They are bossman Merle Oberg, Pat Oberg, Barb Paarmann, and Harriet McNamara.

Shelah Wilgus

KITCHEN CABINET

Our small "kitchen" is used by the congregation for potlucks, parties, rental affairs and for "coffee and conversation" after Sunday service.

Coffee, both regular and decaf and hot water for tea are served during social hour after Sunday service and we often feed more than 150 people.

Noah's Bagels continues to generously give us the bagels left at the end of their business day on Saturday. Brad Bernstein picks up the bagels from Noah's Saturday evening and delivers them to the church on Sunday morning. Dave Davis makes coffee early Sunday morning. The rest of the crew arrives at 9 or so to cut bagels, wash tables and serve. We are always glad to welcome volunteers.

The kitchen committee chair is Shelah Wilgus. Dave Davis, Tessa Weeks, Brad Bernstein, Pam Waldron, Trina Hollander and Carol Simmons continue to provide invaluable support.

Shelah Wilgus, Kitchen Cabinet Chair

BOOKSTORE

The bookstore stocks books, UUCV T-shirts and hats, UU and *Standing on the Side of Love* T-shirts, coffee mugs, jewelry, bumper stickers and license plate frames, and donated items from the members such as mosaics and stained glass. The majority of the books are purchased through the UUA. When 12 or more books are purchased from Skinner House, UUCV receives a 40% discount. Prices listed at the bookstore are no more than 20% above cost. We also carry some books written by UUCV members, including Mitzi Chandler and Amada Perez.

In addition to the UUCV t-shirts in stock, Pam Waldron has offered to machine-embroider a chalice on items submitted by a member for a \$10-12 donation to the bookstore.

The vision for the bookstore was to provide a service for the church community. Members and visitors can purchase books and other items and place special orders for materials not in stock. Staff members and lay leaders can also order books and other items needed for special events and classes, which are sold to the participants at cost. This year, our Fair Trade coffee and chocolate sales were moved into the bookstore, providing more convenience and freeing up another space in Berg Hall.

The bookstore is open after church on Sunday mornings, staffed by four trained lead volunteers who handle all financial transactions and rotate being there on Sunday mornings. Assistants are present to ensure adequate coverage. The bookstore provides a useful and most welcome service to our church.

Pam Waldron

REACHING OUT

SOCIAL ACTION COORDINATING COMMITTEE (SACC)

SACC currently has three Action Groups, through which it coordinates its social justice efforts:

- **Lift Up Your Voice** (to end homelessness);
- **7PEAT** (Seventh Principle/environmental justice); and
- **Education** (support for Will Rogers School).

2016-2017 SACC members are Lety Ball (chair), Harold Cartlidge, Dorothy Fast Horse, and Kitty Merrill. Kent Brinkmeyer, Sue Brinkmeyer (both former chairs of SACC) and Marylou Faris were contributing members of SACC for part of the year. Although SACC has seen some changes in membership in the last year, we continue to work on connecting members with similar interests in our pursuit of social justice.

After leading the major action group, Lift Up Your Voice to End Homelessness, for more than six years, giving her undivided attention and pouring her energy into social justice issues, Sue Brinkmeyer re-retired at the end of the year 2016, as did her husband, Kent Brinkmeyer, who also shared his time and efforts for several years. Marilou Faris also left the committee after several years of educating us in around-the-world social justice issues and keeping us apprised of other Ventura County organizations' efforts to help the less fortunate.

This year, SACC has made it possible for several organizations to hold meetings and reach out to local community members. One of these organizations is SMART (Self-Management and Recovery Training) a recovery program that helps people recover from all types of addiction and addictive behaviors, including drug abuse, drug addiction, gambling addiction, prescription drug abuse, and addiction to other substances and activities.

Another organization that was able to hold meetings at our church, thanks to SACC, is SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice), an organization that connects individuals looking for multi-racial cooperation, justice, human dignity and a sustainable world. SACC also hosted the movie "Do the Math" for about 30 individuals at UUCV. The Do The Math movie is a 42-minute documentary film that explained the scary numbers of the climate crisis, and attendees discussed ways to organize to challenge the fossil fuel industry.

As it did last year, SACC will again host the Write for Your Rights event in conjunction with Planned Parenthood.

SACC voted to request that signs be posted at the entrance to all restrooms at UUCV, letting everyone know that the Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura strives to be an inclusive and welcoming community which provides a safe place for diverse gender expressions and identities, their parents and caregivers, and that anyone can use the restroom where they feel most comfortable.

On November 13, 2016, SACC organized a meeting in which UUCV members got together to discuss our congregation's Social Justice priorities for the next five years. After discussion and tallying of votes, we had six issues that rose to the top. These were, in order of total numbers of votes: environmental issues, women's and reproductive rights, homelessness, human rights, immigrant rights, and racial justice. Other issues of interest included health care, water security, prison reform, and economic inequality.

On January 29, 2017, SACC hosted a meeting on overturning the decision Citizens United. Bill Haff of the Ojai group Move to Amend shared the organization's efforts, the history behind the movement and invited attendees to join. He stated: "Move To Amend is focused both on building an informed social justice movement and accomplishing the practical long-term goal of amending the US constitution, using language that radically challenges the status quo."

Some members of our church continue to form and join groups and organizations that can help bring solutions to social problems. Others get directly involved and try to help individuals in the community:

- With the direction of a social worker, *Cindy Camillucci*, *Kathy Powell* and *Beth Potts-Mee* assisted a homeless man in obtaining a small apartment, working for months to get it all together.
- A group of rotating volunteers from UUCV went every week for four months to Food Share, shopping for and delivering 400-600 pounds of food to the winter warming shelter.
- UUCV members, teaming with members of the Center for Spiritual Living, serve lunch to needy and homeless people on the first Monday of every month.
- UUCV members of the Park Outreach group continually bring dry clothes, baby wipes, razors, shoes, socks, and provide lunch every Tuesday to homeless people in Plaza Park in downtown Ventura.
- Outreach funds provided steel-toe boots for a man from the shelter so he could register at Labor Ready; assisted a homeless man in repairing his bike because his back is broken and the bike is his only way to get around; helped an adopted woman reunite with her birth-mother in another state; provided sleeping bag to a man, a tent for another man, electric chair battery for someone else, registration fees for rehabilitation center and Riverhaven entrance fee for another, and many more.
- UUCV members brought donated clothes to the mental hospital for homeless people who had no clothes when they were admitted.
- UUCV members wrote a letter to a city official who requested it be "put in writing, compellingly" to provide funds to help a woman and her children get to their family in Arizona, resulting in a \$500 donation from Mission Church for that endeavor.
- UUCV members serve at the Oxnard homeless commission and at the Ventura Social Services Task Force.

These are some of the ways in which SACC and members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura share their blessings and work for social justice.

7PEAT

This year, the 7th Principle Environmental Action team (**7PEAT**) adopted the Commit 2 Respond rubric for its work, which involve three pillars.

1. Shift to a Low Carbon Future: We have been working on internal education with a series of mindful eating potlucks and focused discussions, and have begun monthly citizen science events for individuals and families can participate in
2. Advance the Climate Movement: We have supported local environmental group Ventura350 Climate Hub actions by hosting their monthly meetings at the church and staffing an Earth Day tabling event in Oxnard;
3. Grow the Climate Justice Movement: We have begun trying to network with our other area UU congregations to increase our impact.

In addition, we were pleased to support a congregant's initiative to install new bike racks for the church, which encourages non-fossil fuel travel options.

Lety Ball, SACC Chair

INREACH OUTREACH

The Inreach/Outreach Committee continued this year to facilitate the process by which the congregation's weekly Sunday offerings are donated to causes applying for funding via our UUCV's Social Justice grants. Each UUCV newsletter includes information about how much was donated the previous month and the organizations to receive the plate during the current month.

Anne Escobedo, for Inreach/Outreach

PUBLICITY

I have continued to work on alerting others to our events through both social and traditional media. These included major projects for Lift Up Your Voice (the Annual Homeless Memorial Service, Take a Homeless Person to Lunch day); the Sangha Day of Mindfulness; and several concerts and other smaller projects. In addition, I maintain and update material on the website monthly.

This year, we have been working on a plan to restructure how publicity is done, with the goal of adding more volunteers so that we can expand our capabilities to marketing and PR for UUCV while maintaining the website and event publicity.

Kitty Merrill, Publicity Coordinator

ASSOCIATION DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE

Yes, Virginia, there is a District

For the past several years, Jim Merrill has served as the Association-District Representative (ADR), having taken on the role previously held by Kitty McConkie. The Pacific Southwest District Office is no longer maintaining an ADR list. Jim has, however, continued to operate in that role, primarily by providing articles in On Common Ground. Those articles include a report on UUA General Assembly 2016, promotion of Justice District Assembly 2017, the PSWD Chalice Lighters program, and an update on the status of regional collaboration in the Pacific Western Region.

As a reminder, the four districts of the Pacific Western Region – Mountain Desert District, Pacific Central District, Pacific Northwest District, and our own Pacific Southwest District – have opted to retain their individual statuses as districts and participate in regional collaboration rather than dissolving into the structure known as regionalization. The four districts share resources and ideas, and we also recognize that our region, which covers more than half of the territory of the United States, has diverse interests that the districts' leadership believes can be best addressed at a more local level.

Jim Merrill

CARING FOR OUR SPACE

BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE

The Building and Grounds Committee was too busy caring for our space to submit a report this year, but the work they do, both inside and outside our church, is visible every day. Thanks to all who helped out!

GROWING OUR GIFTS

STEWARDSHIP TEAM

The Stewardship team's focus is on nurturing and acknowledging the treasure, time, and talent given to UUCV.

We are a young committee, having had our first meeting in February of 2017. Our first task was to conduct a pledge drive early enough to enable the finance committee to create a budget for 2017-2018. Celebration Sunday was a success; not only was the brunch a joyous celebration of the past generosity of the congregation, but, as of May 1, 2017, our 2017-2018 ANNUAL PLEDGES were 4.8% higher than our 2016-2017 ANNUAL PLEDGES.

Our next focus is to educate the congregation about the Wake Now Our Vision (WNOV) legacy challenge [<http://www.wakenowourvision.org>]. Basically, leave something in your will or trust to UUCV, or name UUCV a beneficiary to an IRA, and UUCV will receive \$1,000 (or 10% if you specify a value) in unrestricted matching funds, which will be released to us in the summer of 2019. Our goal is to have 25% of our congregation submit a WNOV pledge form to the UUA. Kappy Paulson will present an introduction of the program at the Annual Meeting.

In the fall, we are planning a special tribute to acknowledge the individual volunteer time and talent given to UUCV.

Team members are Yukio Okano, Kappy Paulson, Maura Raffensperger, and David Smith.

Vel Linden-Akseven, Carolyn Briggs, Bryan Buck, Dennis Charles, Gudrun Eastham, Kassy Erickson, Anne Escobedo, Ray Escobedo, Mark Gale, Kate Mack, Erin Merrill, Jim Merrill, Madelaine Okano, Bill Peltola, Kim Prieto, Chuck Samonsky, Barbara Smith, Kathy Swift, Katie Turner, Shelah Wilgus, and Gary Zinik are most heartily appreciated for helping with telephone calls, invitation addressing and logistics.

Submitted by Maura Raffensperger

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The finance committee prepares and monitors the annual budget and advises the board of trustees on procedures for handling the financial activities of the church. A budget subcommittee prepares budgets that are then reviewed by the finance committee for recommendation to the board of trustees. The 2017-2018 budget is then voted upon by the congregation at its annual meeting. Many details are considered from those committees and programs that we offer. This happens because we have an involved congregation, good lay and professional leadership, and motivated, hardworking employees. It takes the work of many people beyond the finance committee to produce our annual budgets.

This year's budget is part of a three -year budget, which was created last year to provide us with a vision of how we could continue our level of services as a new ministry was starting up. Past budgets were for one year only. Some important financial work was done by other teams within the congregation this year. First, an ad hoc committee addressed the need to distinguish between major maintenance work and capital improvement projects. Procedures were established for addressing major maintenance needs each year, and for 5-10 years beyond. Clarifying these issues highlighted the fact that the Board of Trustees does not have authority from our church bylaws to spend beyond 2% of annual expenditures in our budget in any given year for unforeseen needs, including major maintenance projects, even in the case of an emergency (such as the failure of our HVAC system). The remedy to this problem is addressed in a bylaw change to be presented at our annual meeting. The finance committee is in support of this bylaw change.

Early in 2017, a Stewardship team was formed to deal with issues of acknowledging the generosity of our congregation, producing a variety of annual pledge campaigns from year to year, and developing an ongoing planned giving program. You can review their start-up activities in that section of this annual report.

The Finance Committee meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm in the conference room. Members of the congregation are welcome to attend. Agendas are available one week prior to the meetings, and can be emailed to members by sending your request to davidpaseo@verizon.net. Monthly financial statements are posted on the bulletin board in the hallway between the office and the Sanctuary, opposite the copy machine.

The Finance Committee at the beginning of this church year consisted of Dennis Charles, David Frank, Ray Escobedo, Jill Forman and Treasurer, Jim Waldron. David Smith is the chairman. Rev. Dana Worsnop is an ex officio member and active participant with the Finance Committee. During the year, Jill Forman resigned as a member of the committee and Mark Gale joined the committee. If you want to give your thanks to them sometime, you are likely to get a smile in return. Church finance can be confusing, hard and often invisible to others, but this work is constantly needed to keep our blue boat sailing.

*David Smith, Finance Chair, and
Jim Waldron, Treasurer*

FUNDING THE MISSION

RECOMMENDED 2017-2018 OPERATING BUDGET

We are a democratic institution, with the unusual provision that all of our members vote on our annual budget. Complex budgets cannot be written by the entire congregation, and our budget is very complex. Those who work on our budgets accept the responsibility of being fair to all the vested interests within the congregation and being as efficient with our money as we can. We need an annual budget to be good stewards of our money, buildings, and grounds, and to provide a future impact for a very long time. We are a strong and vibrant community because of the teachings and generosity of others who have paid for the programs and real estate we currently enjoy.

Our overall financial health is excellent, as indicated in our fund balances. We continue to maintain 3-5 months of reserves in our operating fund. Longer-term money that is unlikely to be spent in less than five years has been appropriately invested. We have no mortgage and we have had net surpluses at the end of each year for at least five years.

Like most individuals and families, there is usually not enough money to do everything we would like to do. It takes thought, input, discussion and meetings to create a balanced budget each year. As pledge revenues change, due to the fluctuation of congregation size and some individual pledge amounts change, we make adjustments.

During most of our history, the budget team prepared a budget that was for one year. Prior to our calling a new minister, the budget team thought that it would be good to project our income and expenses for three years. The intent of doing this was to provide a better sense of how we can maintain our programs beyond the first year of a new ministry. This is year two in this three-year budget. This three-year budget relies on special "bridge" pledges that members made for the purpose of supporting this three-year time period. This means that it is important to build our revenue to replace the bridge pledges after 2018-2019.

Our annual pledge campaign in April was very successful. A Stewardship Committee, formed in January, planned and produced a successful Celebration Sunday. The worship service was on the importance of generosity in each of our lives and for the future of our church. It was followed by a party that starting with mimosas and ended with fresh strawberries and whipped cream. Enough members and friends increased their pledges that day to bring our estimate of next year's pledge revenue to 4.7% (about \$15,000) higher than as of February of this year. See the report from the Stewardship Team.

The Summary Budget is included in the Annual Report and the Fund Balances are on the back of the budget page. Please note that the Detailed Budget with specific line item notes is available in the office. Our monthly reports are posted each month on the hallway bulletin board opposite the photocopy machine. You can also have these documents emailed to you from your treasurer, Jim Waldron, or your finance chair, David Smith. The Finance Committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the conference room. Congregation members are welcome to attend.

Our programs, such as worship services, religious education, music, and membership development, are possible because of our employees. Employee expenses will always be the largest component of our budget. You will note that our income and expenses do not change significantly next year from the 2016-2017 budget year. Because of a recently formed very energetic stewardship committee, it is likely that our income will increase long-term due to bequests from wills, trusts, life insurance, and IRA beneficiary designations. But these are seeds we are planting now, and it will take years before they are strong.

Even a carefully crafted budget can be obscure and inaccessible to the average reader. We are not a business seeking profits and accumulating wealth. Our mission is to change lives for the better, both in our sanctuary and on the streets. It takes money and good budgets to do this next year and every year.

Your Board of Trustees believes the budget before you today is worthy of your consideration.

2015-2016 Recommended Operating Budget (Detail)

		2013-2014	R2 2/8/2015 Revised 2014-2015	R1 8/20/2015 Approved Budget 2015-2016	Approved Budget 2016-2017	Draft Budget 2017-2018	
Income							
	Pledge Collections	\$350,000.00	\$358,432.56	\$360,000.00	\$385,790.00	\$383,000.00	
	Plate Donations	\$2,700.00	\$720.00	\$-	\$-	\$-	
	Other Donations	\$5,000.00	\$8,450.00	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$10,000.00	
	FUNDRAISING	\$23,600.00	\$21,814.00	\$21,800.00	\$28,350.00	\$22,000.00	
	Interest Income	\$700.00	\$960.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$4,000.00	
	Other Income	\$19,700.00	\$2,300.00	\$2,300.00	\$6,000.00	\$8,000.00	
	FUNDING THE MISSION	\$401,700.00	\$392,676.56	\$392,100.00	\$428,140.00	\$427,000.00	
Expenses							
	SUPPORTING OUR STAFF & MINISTRY	\$339,994.98	\$317,479.90	\$338,738.78	\$338,457.34	\$328,102.44	
	CARING FOR OUR SPACE	\$70,836.00	\$53,160.00	\$46,760.00	\$47,920.00	\$51,565.00	
	ENRICHING OUR SHARED LIVES	\$15,850.00	\$18,150.00	\$17,150.00	\$19,350.00	\$20,004.55	
	SUPPORTING OUR MOVEMENT	\$19,404.00	\$19,152.00	\$18,984.00	\$19,178.00	\$18,748.00	
	GROWING OUR GIFTS	\$7,545.00	\$7,250.00	\$13,500.00	\$10,456.67	\$13,638.32	
	REACHING OUT	\$3,650.00	\$4,100.00	\$3,200.00	\$4,000.00	\$2,350.00	
	COVERING THE BASICS	\$13,000.00	\$13,000.00	\$12,800.00	\$12,800.00	\$14,600.00	
	Total Expense	\$470,279.98	\$432,291.90	\$451,132.78	\$452,162.00	\$449,008.31	
	Surplus or (Deficit)	\$(68,579.98)	\$(39,615.34)	\$(59,032.78)	\$(24,022.00)	\$(22,008.31)	
	Covered by Assistant Minister Fund	\$35,000.00	\$17,390.13	\$-	\$-	\$-	
	Covered by LUYV Fund for Director	\$7,000.00	\$1,750.00	\$-	\$-	\$-	
	Covered by Prior Years' Surplus	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	
	Legacy Match+Special Funding for staffing		\$19,375.21	\$53,086.02	\$23,730.57	\$23,730.57	
	Net Surplus or (Deficit) BUDGETED	\$(26,579.98)	\$0.00	\$(5,946.76)	\$(291.43)	\$1,722.27	

2015-2016 Recommended Operating Budget (Detail)

			R2 2/8/2015 Revised 2014-2015	R1 8/20/2015 Approved Budget 2015-2016	Approved Budget 2016-2017	Draft Budget 2017-2018	
		2013-2014					
Actual June 30 Net		\$3,341.00	\$5,228.00	\$14,638.00	TBD		TBD=Available after 6/30/17
<u>Not Part of the Operating Budget:</u>							
	Sunday Collections for Inreach/Outreach:	\$40,000.00	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00	
	One time expenses for newDRE and B&G - off budget from reserves						
	Expense from Major Maintenance Fund for building repairs					\$20,000.00	requested from B&G
	Expense from Special Children's RE Fund (in Legacy Fund)					\$9,500.00	moving and equip for New DRE

FUND BALANCES

Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura Fund Balances April 30, 2017							
	CCB-Checking	Pac West Bk	BOW3 - CD	Synchrony Bk	LPL Financial	United Ch Fd	Total Funds
1031 · Checking Account	\$86,683.00						\$86,683.00
Endowment Fund	\$3,546.00		\$5,197.60				\$8,743.60
Investment Funds				\$205,351.00	\$134,215.00	\$128,691.43	\$468,257.43
Total	\$90,229.00		\$5,197.60	\$205,351.00	\$134,215.00	\$128,691.43	\$563,684.03

Unitarian Universalist Principles

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Mission Statement

We, the members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura, united by our liberal religious tradition, seek truths and meaning, and commit to right action. We will nurture our congregation and carry our principles forth to better ourselves, our community and our planet. To these purposes we pledge our hearts and hands, our minds and means.



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