

2015-2016 Annual Report



First Unitarian Church of Omaha
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In Memoriam

Pat Allender
Alex Nather
Kelly Outson
Barbara Rippey

Table of Contents

Board of Trustees and Other Elected Positions.....	4
Meeting Agenda	5
Minutes of May 17, 2015 Meeting	6
Slate of Nominees for Election.....	8
Annual Reports, as Submitted	
Minister.....	10
Ministry Team Council Report.....	11
President.....	12
Director of Religious Education.....	13
Twenty Years Ago.....	14
Archives Team.....	15
Book Club.....	15
Capital Trust.....	16
Caring Team.....	17
Sub-team: Hope in Action.....	17
Chalice Guild.....	18
Choir.....	19
Community Meals.....	19
Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS).....	20
Early Morning Risers.....	20
Environmental Team(OTOC).....	21
Fellowship and Activities Team.....	22
Finance Team.....	22
Foyer Improvement Project.....	23
Fundraising Team.....	23
Holland Lecture Series Committee.....	24
Hospitality Teams.....	24
House and Grounds.....	25
Membership Team.....	26
Nominating Committee.....	27
Office Team.....	28
Partner Church Team.....	29
Sarah Joslyn Society.....	30
Stewardship Committee.....	31
Sunday Services Live Streaming.....	32
Tolerant Atheist Group.....	32
Women's Alliance.....	33
Worship Arts Team.....	34
Young Adult Group.....	34
YRUU.....	35
Appendix:	
New Members.....	39
Weddings and Unions.....	40
Comments on Budget 2014-15/Budget 2015-2016.....	42
2016-2017 Budget.....	43
Bequests.....	46
Staff.....	47

Board of Trustees

Jack Round, President
Jackie Anderegg, President-Elect
Walt Jesteadt, Treasurer
Cy Leise, Secretary (May 2017)
Dean Christensen (May 2016)
Sheri Conner, (2017)
Jack Heidel (May 2016)
Linda Parker (May 2018)
Kabin Thomas (May 2018)

Elected Trustees of the Capital Trust

Tim Duggan (May 2016)
Steve Hutchinson (May 2017)
Evelyn Whitehill (May 2018)

Nominating Committee

Convener: Louise Jeffrey

To May 2016: Thomas, Joe Schaaf
To May 2017: Kim Callaghan, Nadine Keith
To May 2018: Molly Dewell, Dave Olson

Agenda
The One Hundred Forty-Seventh Annual Meeting
First Unitarian Church of Omaha
May 15, 2016

Call to Order	Jack Round, President
Confirmation of Quorum	Cy Leise, Secretary
Appointment of Parliamentarian	G. David Richardson
Approval of Minutes (as printed in meeting book)	146 th Annual Meeting, May 17, 2015

Annual Reports - Questions from the floor regarding any and all annual reports as printed in the meeting book, including those of the Minister, President, Ministry Team Council, Director of Religious Education, Trustees of the Capital Trust Fund, and all team and committee reports

Presentation of Proposed Budget	Walt Jesteadt, Treasurer
Adoption of 2016-17 Budget	

Elections:

Presentation of the Nominees	Nominating Committee
<i>President-Elect</i>	
<i>Board of Trustees</i>	
<i>Trustee of the Capital Trust</i>	
<i>Nominating Committee</i>	

Recognition of Completion of Terms	Jack Round
Nominations and Awards	Nominating Committee
Unitarian of the Year	Jack Round
Adjourn	Jackie Anderegg, President-Elect

First Unitarian Church of Omaha

Minutes of 146th Congregational Meeting

May 17, 2015

Quorum: 176 Eligible Voters

78 Eligible Voters Present

Call to Order: President Louise Jeffrey called the meeting to order at 12:25 p.m.

Quorum: Sheri Conner, Secretary, confirmed the presence of a quorum of eligible voting members of the church.

Parliamentarian: Louise Jeffrey recognized Dave Richardson as Parliamentarian.

Approval of Minutes: Laurie Gift made the motion to approve the minutes from the 145th Congregational Meeting on May 18, 2014. The motion was seconded by Eddith Buis. The motion passed unanimously.

Annual Reports:

Minister: delivered by Frank Rivas and printed in meeting book.

Ministry Team Council: printed in meeting book.

Presidents Report: delivered by Louise Jeffrey and printed in meeting book.

Director of Religious Education: printed in meeting book.

Trustees of Capital Trust Fund: printed in meeting book.

Team Reports: printed in meeting book.

Proposal for Membership Coordinator: delivered by Jackie Anderegg, Membership Chair
The rationale behind creating a Membership Coordinator position as well as elements of the position and means of funding were discussed. Funding for the first year will be from the Holland development monies. Subsequent years will likely be from the budget.

Proposal for Amendment to Bylaws: Louise Jeffrey

The proposed amendment to section 2.F of the Bylaws would be as follows [the proposed amendment would add the phrase which is in bold italics]:

“2.F. Twenty (20%) percent of members eligible to vote shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a membership meeting, and the power to vote shall be limited to voting members present (*including members present via two-way audio-visual communication pursuant to procedures established by the Board*). The Board Secretary shall prepare and make available a list of eligible members not less than (5) business days before the meeting.”

The motion for the amendment to the Bylaws was made by Bill Ross and seconded by Kate Godfrey. The motion carried with 73 votes.

Presentation of Proposed Budget Adoption of 2015-16 Budget:

delivered by Bill Ross for Walt Jesteadt, Treasurer

The proposed budget assumes pledge contributions of \$245,000 for the coming year and use of \$5,000 from the 2014-2015 surplus as additional income to balance the budget. If our expenses continue to be somewhat lower than projected, we may not need those funds. The biggest uncertainty in the budgeted income for the year is not pledge contributions, but the rental of most of our parking on weekdays to the National Indemnity Insurance Company. If they move during the coming year, we will lose \$735 a month in income.

The proposed budget meets our obligations to the UUA and the Mid America Region and provides a modest raise and appropriate benefits for our staff, while fully funding our programs for the coming year. We continue to have cash reserves that could be used to cover a budget shortfall or one-time expenses outside the scope of the operating budget. Our cash reserves would be sufficient to operate the church for a full year without any income and we can absorb the loss of the parking lot rental income if necessary.

Motion to approve the 2015-16 Budget made by John Goldner and seconded by Carolyn McNamara. The motion passed unanimously.

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Elections:

Presentation of Nominees: Nadine Keith

Motion to vote on the election of the proposed nominees as a slate and approval of the slate of candidates was made by Ben Wallace and seconded by Maria Wallace. The motion unanimously passed.

Slate:

President Elect: Jacqueline Anderegg

Board of Trustees: Linda Parker (2018), Kabin Thomas (2018)

Trustee of Capital Trust Fund: Evelyn Whitehall (2018)

Nominating Committee: Molly Dewell (2018), Dave Olson (2018)

Recognition of Completion of Terms: delivered by Louise Jeffrey.

Board of Trustees: Louise Jeffrey, Lynette Ryder, and Ron Withem.

Trustee of the Capital Trust: Sandy Host

Nominating Committee: Abby Cape, Dave Olson

Nominations and Awards: delivered by Nadine Keith.

Annual Awards:

Heritage Award – Nellie Chenoweth, Religious Education Award – Roman Noriega, Keeping the Faith Award – Linda Hess, Social Justice Award – Lori Hefeli, Social Justice Award Youth – Jared Kolok, Unsung

Unitarian Award – Dean Christensen and Jack Perry.

Unitarian of the Year Award – Ben Wallace

Calling of Rev. Frank Rivas as Settled Minister:

Statement by Reverend Frank Rivas:

Reverend Frank Rivas stated that he feels this is a healthy congregation and that after nearly three years of service as Developmental Minister, he is a good fit for the church.

Reverend Rivas' goals for the church include fostering more engagement which will hopefully translate into more members, more engagement with the LGBT community and more dialogue.

Questions and Answers period for the Ministerial Candidate:

The following individuals posed questions to Reverend Rivas: Jaime Alexander, Carolyn McNamara, Kate Wiig, Joe Schaaf, and Maria Wallace.

Discussion Amongst the Voting Body:

Louise Jeffrey explained the role of developmental minister.

Ben Wallace asked about the board's role? **A.** As interim minister, Reverend Rivas answers to the board; as a called minister, he answers to the congregation.

Dave Olson further explained the relationship between the minister and the board.

Vote on the Calling of Reverend Frank Rivas as Settled Minister:

78 Voting members present.

73 Yes

3 No

2 Abstentions

Pass with 93.6%.

Adjourned: at 1:45 p.m. by President Jack Round.

Minutes prepared by Sheri Conner, Board Secretary

**Slate of Nominees for Election
Annual Congregational Meeting
May 15, 2016**

President-Elect

Alan Vovolka

Board of Trustees

2019 — Floyd Prine

2019 — Joe Schaaf

Trustee of Capital Trust Fund

2019 — Dean Christensen

Nominating Committee

2019 — Carol Ramsey

2019 — Ben Wallace

Annual Reports

Minister, Ministry Team Council, President, Director of Religious Education,
and other Team and Committee Reports as Submitted

*(Reports are presented alphabetically by group name.
Unless otherwise noted, reports were submitted
by the Team Leader or Committee Chair.)*



Minister's Report to the Congregation — 2015/2016

Submitted by Rev. Frank Rivas

We continue to grow as a church community, particularly in response to the needs of the world around us. Our commitment to being the lead church in Community Meals expanded this year to also serving a monthly meal at Youth Emergency Services. Our commitment, in concert with Clair Memorial United Methodist Church, to addressing racism in our city grew to the congregation's decision to display a Black Lives Matter banner in front of our church. This second commitment did not happen easily, but it happened well. We listened, really listened to one another first on Facebook, then in an all-church forum. We heard and respected several perspectives; we voted to display the banner; and we continue to accept and recognize differences. An issue that could have divided us became an issue that has made our community stronger.

Our church is in a powerful position. We meet in a beautiful space in a central location; we have two separate music programs, each extraordinary; our Sunday school program, long of high value, is finally attracting more young families; our Sunday attendance, which spans generations, is enviable. We like one another, enjoy church events, and are comfortable with differences in age, theology, and sexual orientation. Most recently, there has been a strong commitment to learning more about our Unitarian and Universalist heritage. When I tell colleagues about this church, they wait for the other shoe to drop. Perhaps you experience the same when you talk with members of other congregations. There is no other shoe.

Let's enjoy this moment and work together to improve on it. At the last meeting of the Board of Trustees, we began talking about moving beyond planning for the next year or two toward envisioning First Unitarian in 10 or 15 or 20 years. We have great potential. We can become a more powerful influence in our community. May we use our potential well.

In faith,
Frank

Ministry Team Council

Members: Rev. Frank Rivas, Church Administrator Catharine Dixon, Diane Withem, Nellie Chenoweth, President-Elect Jacqueline Anderegg

The Ministry Team is composed of the approximately 24 individual teams that serve the church. The Ministry Team Council (the Council) provides procedures, direction, support and leadership to the individual teams. The membership of the Council is the President-Elect chosen by the congregation, a Board appointed member for a two year term, and a member elected by the Ministry Team for a two-year term. The Board appointee and the Ministry Team appointee alternate terms. The Council meets once a month and the Teams meets once every two months. All members are welcome at both meetings. Our newsletter is the *The Candle* (formerly known as *Voluntary Servitude*) which is emailed to all team leaders each month. The Council does a great deal of decision-making around events in the church, administrative details, problem-solving, and support for the teams.

Events Sponsored by the Ministry Team Council:

- Volunteer Fair
- Rowdy Sunday, a Celebration of Our Teams
- Lori Emison Clair Forum
- Planning with the Board for a Leadership Retreat on August 6, 2016 at Joslyn Art Museum

Ministry Team Meetings and Agenda Discussions and Decisions:

- Outlined procedures and forms for use of our building, use of church resources and event planning.
- Established communication guidelines for team meetings.
- Established a calendar for Council meetings, Ministry Team meetings and events sponsored by the Council.
- Finalized a branding report started the previous year.
- Set Share the Plate recipients for the coming year.
- Decisions about advertising in wedding journal and River City Chorus.
- Decision about film projector in the Common Room.
- Concerts.
- Discussion groups.
- Film programs.
- Work with Board on bylaw policy for congregational support in public positions.
- Creation of new Communications Team to change communication policies and provide oversight.
- Working with Board around Black Lives Matter support.
- Railing and furniture for Whitney Young Room.
- Support for Neighborhood Ministry Team.
- Facilitating video streaming of church services.
- Articles in *The Flame* about Council functions.
- Facilitating Stewardship Chair positions.
- Streamlining division of responsibility issues between Board and Council.
- Putting Council minutes into Board minutes.
- Safety issues with parking lot and facilitation of video monitoring and lighting.
- Purchase of office copier.
- Establishing monthly reports for teams.

President's Report

Submitted by Jack Round

We have an amazing community. We (the Board) attempted to continue the positive momentum passed to us from the previous Board and Board President. I felt the Board made a great team and appreciate each Board member and the enormous strengths they brought to the team. This year we wanted to make progress toward the following five-year goals (which emerged from church leadership retreats):

- Advance membership.
- Deepen our internal community.
- Increase our internal diversity.
- Increase our social justice impact.
- Facilitate and broaden church leadership.
- Good branding/marketing/advertising (“get our message out there”).
- Increase the use of technology.
- Improve and maintain the building (potentially a renovated RE wing).
- A Religious Education program that covers the life span of members and has a strong reputation in the community.
- Work toward financial sustainability.
- Increase community involvement and leadership (potentially expanding the Unitarian presence in Omaha).
- Celebrate the 150 year anniversary of the church and 100 year anniversary of our sanctuary.
- An active teaching church that helps train ministerial interns.

I feel we (the church) made progress towards each of these goals.

Thank you to everyone who provided their energy, talent, time, financial and other resources to our community this year. As it was given to us, I hope we were able to pass positive momentum on to the next Board and Board President.

Director of Religious Education

Submitted by Jan Wilson

The summer of 2015 began with a summer camp which lasted five days at the beginning of June for students aged 5-10. We experimented with many different art forms in the morning and went to field trips related to art in the afternoon. Many volunteers taught games, music, art, and dancing. Parents provided transportation to the various field trips, which included the Union for Contemporary Arts, Connect Gallery, and The Kaneko. A gallery of the artwork was presented to the parents on the last day, and to the congregation on Sunday.

Prior to the fall session, families attended an overnight retreat at the Swanson Center. I created children's art workshops and read stories highlighting themes of appreciation of the natural world.

Fall curriculum was structured around the Birth to 18 guide prepared by the Curriculum Committee of the RE Council. This work will be ongoing. The aim is to provide consistent goals for the teaching of important aspects of UU learning on a three-year rotation. The subject of this year's study is our UU Heritage. The spring classes will focus on particular UU s and end with a history of our own congregation, including images and stories by our resident archivist, Dave Richardson.

A new family social event was begun to bring the parents of toddlers together for fun and pizza. This group, called POPS, gets together on the second Friday of the month. Our nursery professional, Jenny Hastings, and her staff care for children in the nursery. We continue to offer CommUnity Night on first Fridays for potluck supper and games, but without nursery coverage. This continues to be one of our most popular events.

Jenny Hastings has provided nursery care since she was hired in December of 2015. We have experienced record numbers in the nursery attendance. Her popularity with parents has resulted in larger numbers of families with small children attending evening events. Gale Callaghan has assisted Jenny as a youth volunteer. We all depend on Gale and honor his commitment.

On March 4th of 2016, I tripped and fell in the middle classroom resulting in a broken shoulder. After surgery and eight weeks of recovery, I am currently returning to work on a limited basis. Terrific volunteers Donna Neff, Sheri Conner, Kate Wiig, Adam Sagert and Roman Noriega organized the Spring Carnival and wrote Sunday School lessons for the weeks I was absent.

YRUU has needed a sustainable plan for the turnover of advisors. This year, Molly Kliment-Jenkins (DRE 2nd UU) and I met with youth and parents to rewrite a policy to guide the group in the future. Two primary advisors, one from each congregation, were recommended by the Transition Team and submitted to the group for approval. The new advisors will work together with each other and with Molly and I over the summer to prepare for the new year in the fall.

Our Religious Education program has purchased a one-year membership that will provide this group and adult sponsors with admission for board game playing from 9:00-12:30 on Sunday mornings only. Ryan Cook gathers the group by the elevator and walks from church at 10:30. At Spielbound they have the traditional check-in followed by a game selected by Ryan and Bethany Cook. Abby Cape and Geoff Chenoweth also provide adult guidance.

We honor the contribution of our two YRUU advisors who are stepping down this year after serving faithfully for a decade. We extend our sincere thanks to Ben Wallace and Shawne Coonfare for their leadership with the youth.

We enjoy increased attendance in both Sunday classes and weekday events.

Twenty Years Ago — 1995-1996

Submitted by Dave Richardson

The Annual Report for 1995-96 begins with Ron Knapp's farewell as he concluded his 20-year tenure as our minister. He noted that ministers come and go but the church goes on forever. He concluded with a short poem by James Russell Lowell which contains the line "New occasions teach new duties."

President Bob Slaughter reported that the church had made considerable progress in pursuit of several goals. He noted that the elevator project was on hold due to some changes in state regulations. The money for this project was held in escrow. He also applauded the hiring of Cheryll Wallace as the Director of Religious Education calling her a "godsend." Jan Wilson, chair of the Religious Education Council, also lauded Cheryll's work since coming on board in November.

Jack Perry chaired the Interim Minister Search Committee which began its task in November of 1995. He was happy to report that on April 23, 1996, Rev. Angeline Theisen had signed a contract to serve as Interim Minister for one year beginning in August.

During the past year the church welcomed 26 new members bringing our total membership to 273.

Archives Team

Leader: Dave Richardson

Activities — 2015/2016:

We are approaching two major milestones in our church's long history. In the church year 2018/2019 we will celebrate two key anniversaries: the centennial of the dedication of our church (1918) and the sesquicentennial of the founding of the First Unitarian Church of Omaha (1869).

In preparation for the celebration of our heritage, the Archives Team has been increasing our activities. We have been holding bi-monthly "Archives Parties" usually on the third Thursday of the month in the Common Room. These "parties" are actually thinly disguised work sessions designed to help organize, categorize and otherwise put things in order. One of the primary goals of this project is to compile and publish a comprehensive history of the church.

A number of people have already assisted in sorting documents, photos, sermons and other holdings. Several members have agreed to share their skills in production of this publication. Many have already volunteered time and effort. I hope I don't leave any deserving people off this list: Kay Lynn Goldner, Judith Wright, Jim Wigton, Ron Knapp, Jack Perry, Carol Cronin, Linda Parker, Sandy Host, Lois Norris, Ellen Shurson, Carolyn McNamara, Rae Berry, Louise Jeffrey, Jaime Alexander, Janet West, Eddith Buis and Elaine Wells.

Book Club

Chair: Dave Richardson

Members: Varies widely

Activities — 2015/2016:

The First Unitarian Book Club continues to read and discuss a wide range of books. We meet on the last Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Merritt Lounge. Our discussions are informal and we encourage participation by everyone. Our motto continues to be: "You Don't Have to Have Read the Book to Attend." We try to read at least one book by our Holland lecturers as a primer for the spring and fall lectures.

Here is a list of this year's books. We do not meet in December, June or July. Bad weather hit us in January so we postponed that month, moving the book selection to the next month.

Absence of Mind by Marilynne Robinson

Our Kids by Robert Putnam

This Changes Everything by Naomi Klein

Between the World and I by Te-Nehisi Coates

The Wages of Rebellion by Chris Hedges

Altered Genes; Twisted Truth by Steven Druker

The Merchants of Doubt by Naomi Oreskes

Capital Trust Fund

Submitted by Steve Hutchinson, Chair

Members: Tim Duggan, Steve Hutchinson (Chairman), Evelyn Whitehill (Bob Ross, ex officio member and data compiler)

The Capital Trust was established in 1981 to provide management of the Church's long-term capital investments and keep them independent of the daily operations of the Church. The Trustees of the Capital Trust (who serve staggered three year terms) during the past year were Evelyn Whitehill (May 2018), Tim Duggan (May 2016) and Steve Hutchinson (May 2017).

Investment income is distributed monthly to the Church for operating expenses. Preservation and growth of the principal is the primary directive and principal cannot be distributed to the Church without a vote of the congregation. The Trust also handles the investments of two small restricted use donations: Music and Women's Alliance. There is some question about whether the Women's Alliance fund is a restricted fund of the Church or whether it belongs to the Church and is segregated by the Board for use at the recommendation of the Women's Alliance. That matter is to be resolved by the Board.

Approximately 69% of the Trust's total assets are invested in two Vanguard equity funds. The balance of the investments are invested in Fidelity and T. Rowe Price current income funds—15% in mortgage funds and 16% in bond funds. The Trust no longer holds any cash.

In the Fiscal Year ended April 30, 2016, the Trust distributed \$13,650.88 of income to the Church (compared to \$13,393.14 last year). Of that total amount, \$12,816.57 was attributable to regular trust income and \$834.69 to restricted use income. During the year, the market value of the investments managed by the Capital Trust Committee decreased from \$493,086.62 (at April 30, 2015) to \$484,435.02 (at April 30, 2016). During the last fiscal year year, the Capital Trust Fund produced a net gain of 1.0% which consisted of a yield of 2.8% that was distributed to the operating budget of the Church partially offset by a loss of market value of the investments of 1.8%. This performance tracked closely with broad stock market indices. For instance the S & P 500 index, a broad measure of domestic stock performance, declined 1% (from 2085 to 2065) during that period.

Caring Team

Leader: Katrina Schmidt **New Leader:** Louise Jeffrey

Members: First Unitarian is a caring congregation! However, our Caring Team, which consists of approximately 28 members, does its best to lead this effort. We coordinate most of our activities by email with in-person meetings in the fall and spring.

Activities — 2015/2016:

The Caring Team responds to the needs of our congregation by giving support for special needs wherever possible. There are also regular functions we attend to such as greeting cards for holidays, hospitality at memorial services, rides for individuals as needed, and annual activities listed below.

We send out greeting cards and well wishes to the people on the caring list. This is handled by Terri Lynn Brewer. At Christmas we purchase and send poinsettias to everyone on the caring list.

This year we served coffee at memorial service receptions for Barbara Rippey (Sept. 12, 2015), Alex Nather (Sept. 30, 2015), Carol Cronin's husband, John Cronin (Nov. 13, 2015), Mark Loscutoff's father, Jack Loscutoff (Oct. 17, 2015). Special thanks go to Kay Lynn Goldner and Deb Duggan for coordinating memorial services. There are many unsung heroes on our Caring Team and in our church! These are the people who respond to requests for help and do more than might be expected in caring for our church family.

Sub-Team of Caring: Hope in Action

Leader: Kim Dunovan

Members: Vanessa Timberlake, Kay Lynn Goldner, Liz Sagert, Larry Goeser, Carol Ramsey, John Hruska, Katrina Schmidt (ex-officio)

Activities & Projects — 2015/2016:

Hope in Action was launched in August, 2014 as a new sub-team of the Caring Team. The purpose of Hope in Action is to make it easier for First Unitarian Church of Omaha members, friends, regular attendees and their spouses to ask for support. Hope in Action is available when people are dealing with a medical problem, need transportation or help around the house, can use assistance with referrals to social service agencies, or just need someone to talk to about the ups and downs of life. Short-term emergency financial assistance may be available for lodging, food, clothing, medication, transportation and utilities.

Hope in Action uses a team approach, so at least three members of the Hope in Action team must participate in determining the nature of the response to a request for assistance.

Requests for assistance must be made directly by the person needing help. Hope in Action does not respond to any anonymous or third party requests for assistance. A confidential request for assistance from Hope in Action may be made by (1) sending an email to the designated email address, (2) using the Hope in Action link on the church website, or (3) calling the church office and leaving a message in the designated voicemail box.

Hope in Action has developed an Omaha Resource Guide for social service referrals that is provided to folks who contact Hope in Action and people who come to the church door seeking assistance.

Hope in Action provided the following support during the past year:

- Purchased thirty-day unlimited bus pass to help with transportation to a new job (\$55).
- Helped person apply to Together Inc. for rent and utility assistance to prevent eviction and utility shut-off.
- Created signup genius to provide rides to church for member who was no longer on a bus line.
- Assisted member with large medical bills needing help interpreting health insurance claims.

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- Counseled member who was victim of financial abuse.
- Contributed \$50 toward purchase of a train ticket for person referred by PFLAG who was fleeing an abusive relationship.
- Provided financial counseling and made an emergency loan of \$266 to church member to pay delinquent debts, with a \$30/month loan repayment schedule.

Chalice Guild

Leader: Kay Lynn Goldner

Members: Terri Lynn Brewer, Kim and Brian Callaghan, Nolan DeVries, Sandy Host, Nathan Kramer, Carolyn McNamara, Donna Neff, Christina and Roman Noriega, Lois Norris, Dee Otte, Judith Wright

Activities & Projects — 2015-2016:

Kitchen and table linens were washed as used. The chancel candles were replaced approximately every three months and the brass candle tops cleaned. Because of the expense of the candles (\$3.75 each), the Guild has begun the practice of removing the brass tops as the candles burn down to extend the usage. Several members (including Barb Ross) were responsible for decorating, then un-decorating the church at Christmas time. The pews and pew racks were wiped down, the cushions were vacuumed, and the foyer and sanctuary were dusted. Members of the Guild participated in the all church clean-up on May 14.

The chairperson continues to be grateful for the Guild members who always cheerfully do whatever needs to be done. They are all unsung heroes!

Choir

Director: Bob McMeen

Accompanist: Keith Hart

Librarians: Kay Lynn Goldner, Kay McMeen and Christina Noriega

Honored Lifetime Member: Olive Erickson

Honored Former Accompanist: Pat Allender

Choir Members: Skip Ciulla, Barb Dewell, Bruce Godfrey, Kay Lynn Goldner, Barb Herring, Erin Higgins, Anne McCormick, Doug McIntosh, Frank McKee, Kay McMeen, Maxine Noodell, Christina Noriega, Clacy Olson, Dave Olson, Catherine Plumlee, Carol Ramsey, David Rosser, Evy Rosser, Caitlin Seguin, Tom Seguin, Shaylea Valentine, Maria Wallace, and Elaine Wells. Inactive members due to conflicts: Matt Dewell, Molly Dewell, Kabin Thomas, and Mary Thomas

Activities — 2015/2016:

The choir began rehearsals on August 19 and sang once in September and then sang twice each month through May. The choir sang an impressive concert at the Durham Museum Christmas celebration, missed Christmas Eve because of a snow storm and finished the year on May 15 with the annual Choir Service. On March 20, the choir dedicated its music to Pat Allender, former choir accompanist, who passed away earlier this year.

Community Meals

Team Leader: Diane Withem

Activities — 2015-2016:

Once again First Unitarian Church has stepped up to take an active role in community outreach through Community Meals. A very committed group of volunteers regularly staff the dining room at First Baptist Church along with other church members who attend individual dates. Volunteers set up and clean up, and pick up the free groceries from Trader Joe's that we distribute to our guests. This year that group has included Kay Lynn Goldner and Louise Jeffrey (who, along with Vickie Hawks Love, are leaders of the weekly crew), Dean Christensen, Linda Hess, Brian and Kim Callaghan, and Terri Lynn Brewer. New to our frequent helpers were Andrea and Martin Hayes. There are numerous volunteers who regularly donate desserts, cook and clean, but they are too numerous to list!

Over the course of the year, in addition to weekly volunteers, and with the help of other First Unitarian volunteers, we served five meals (one more than we normally do). Sign-up sheets, both online and paper, were offered to those interested in participating, beginning three to four weeks before each meal. While we partially fund the meals through Share the Plate donations, many people generously donated the food they prepared. Cooking is done by volunteers who sign up to. The meals this year included: pulled pork sandwiches, enchilada casserole, Little Caesar's pizza, chili, and a fried chicken deli dinner.

Upon each occasion, an enthusiastic crew of First Unitarian volunteers met at First Baptist to finish preparing food, visit with guests, serve and clean up. The meal begins with a blessing, usually given by Reverend Frank, and it is a rewarding time of camaraderie with friends and a chance to be of service to our neighbors and the church community.

Thanks to our generous congregation, we had the funds to add to our services this year with regular monthly meals for YES (Youth Emergency Services). Kim Callaghan is heading up this volunteer crew, preparing meals for 50-75, at home and in our church kitchen. No service is required — the meals are delivered in the early afternoon and have been enthusiastically enjoyed.

Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS)

Co-Leaders: Kate Godfrey and Mary Kay Peters

Activities & Projects — 2015/2016:

Mystic Sojourn CUUPS has had a great first year. As part of a national organization, our goals include educating people about paganism and promoting interfaith dialogue, along with encouraging the greater use of poetry, dancing, and creative rituals in Unitarian Universalism worship. As a group, we embrace the spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature. Our Mission Statement is to pledge ourselves to explore, respect, and revere the earth-based spiritual path.

We have been holding alternate public and private monthly meetings. We try to have our public meetings on the first Sunday evening of every other month in the First Unitarian common room or at a local outdoor setting, when the weather is nice. Our private covenant group meetings, held on alternate months, are more flexible with dates because we sometimes hold them at members' homes.

We held a retreat to kick-off our formation as an official chapter in September 2015 at Platte River State Park, and plan to make it an annual event. Future goals include possibly expanding our retreats at the park to include other local communities of pagans.

We participated in the spring Ostara service at First Unitarian. We hold fundraising events throughout the year (bake sales) to help offset the costs of our annual retreat. We hope to start building bridges with Second Unitarian and Lincoln Unitarian pagans in the next year. We also hope to get involved in community outreach this next year through participation in specific local events that would support our Mission Statement at venues such as Kaneko or House of Loom.

Early Morning Risers

Members: Gale Callaghan, Salvatore Ciulla, Krystal Davis, Nolan DeVries, Matt Dewell, Molly Dewell, Alan Godfrey, Billie Grant, Rene' Harper, Stan Harper, Collin Hatcher, Lita Magisana, Dave Olson, Mary Kay Peters, Annette Rodriguez, Dave Rosser, Katrina Schmidt, Tom Seguin, Caitlin Seguin, Kabin Thomas, Mary Thomas, Shay Valentine, Ben Wallace, Maria Wallace, Kate Wiig, Liam Wiig, Xander Wiig

Facebook Coordinator and Facilitator: Rene' Harper

Facebook and Communications Assistant: Molly Dewell

Pianist: Stan Harper

Summer Music Coordinator: Judi Torneten

Sound Technician: Dave Rosser

Teams Meeting Liaison: Kathi Oliver

Music Purchaser: Ben Wallace

Grand Master Jedi Pirate Queen: Maria Wallace

Activities & Projects — 2015/2016:

The Early Morning Risers (EMR) have a unique organizational structure. René facilitates group discussion about song choices and rehearsals, and passes on our song selections to Catharine so that they appear in the weekly Order of Worship. René also shares her amazing musical talents and supports and encourages the group. Molly assists with creating events on the Facebook page and communicates with other individuals on behalf of EMR. Kathi Oliver represents EMR at Teams meetings. Long-time member Dave Rosser regularly runs our sound system but we have a couple of other helpful individuals who occasionally fill in, including Brian Callaghan. Stan Harper continues to serve as our regular accompanist and plays multiple other

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instruments as well. Collin is a new member this year who has added his exceptional talents with guitar, drums, and vocals. Long-time member Dave Olson continues to serve as a great guitarist and vocalist. Matt Dewell still does an awesome job playing bass with us on some Sundays but Maria Wallace has taught herself how to play the bass and has taken over a large portion of the bass playing. EMR also often performs songs composed by Maria Wallace. Skip and Kate have cut back a bit on their participation but still sometimes add their wonderful musical talents to our services. New member Billie has added her great vocal talent and new song ideas. Mary continues to add her vocal talent and creative song ideas.

We work together as a team to choose songs that both fit the theme of the service and are meaningful to us personally. This is a creative challenge that we enjoy. We are getting used to running our song choices by the online databases to ensure that we have the legal rights to stream them with our live web streaming. The streaming of services has raised challenges but is also an exciting opportunity to reach out to those who cannot be at the service. Many of our members play multiple instruments and fulfill numerous roles within our group. EMR is never the same group every week. We have many extraordinarily talented individuals who participate in our group when they can, which allows others to periodically take breaks. Every one of our members plays an important and essential role in our group. I could probably write a paragraph about each one of them. In the coming year, we hope to continue to grow and change, increase participation of our new members and occasional members, and continue to improve the way we work together as a group. We are honored to serve our church in a way that allows us to express ourselves creatively.

OTOC (Omaha Together One Community) Environmental Action Team

Leader: Laurie Gift

Members: Mark Loscutt, Janet West, Clyde Kramer, Elaine Wells, Alan Vovolka

Activities & Projects — 2015/2016:

Alan created a climate change statement that became OTOC's official statement on climate change.

Alan and Elaine testified at the January 22, 2015 OPPD Board meeting in favor of a proposed Demand Management program that would help spread the demand for power during the hottest summer days.

Alan and Janet testified at the November 2015 OPPD Board meeting to oppose OPPD's rate restructuring plan.

Alan, Janet and Laurie hosted a public event about OPPD's rate restructuring program in December 2015.

OPPD's President, Tim Burke, attended along with approximately 100 others.

On March 31, 2015, Laurie joined OTOC in meeting with Governor Ricketts. She discussed climate change and UNL's study of the impact of climate change on Nebraska.

Throughout 2015, Laurie and Elaine met with approximately six state senators to discuss climate change and UNL's study of the impact of climate change on Nebraska.

Laurie chaired several events at Urban Abbey Coffee shop to inform the public on climate change, legislative bills and OPPD issues. Laurie co-chaired the "Prayers for the Planet" event in September 2015. The event highlighted Pope Francis' Encyclical on Climate Change. Approximately 150 people attended.

OTOC's Environmental Action Team took the following positions on legislative bills:

- Support LB 664 which would require anyone dumping fracking waste water in Nebraska to make public the chemicals that are in that water.
- Oppose LB 176 — Corporations owning hogs
- Support LB 558 — Cottage Foods bill
- Support LB 423 — Community-based economic development renewables projects
- Support LB 469 — Create a state energy plan

Fellowship Team

Leaders: Nellie Chenoweth, Nadine Keith, Judith Wright

Members who helped with activities: John & Linda Hruska, Krystal Davis, Carol Prine, Carole Cronin, Wendi Jensen, Roman Noriega, Lois Norris, Cy & Marcia Leise, Carolyn McNamara, Julie Jons, Roger & Julie Nicolaisen, Kim & Brian Callaghan

Activities & Projects — 2015/2016:

Welcome Back Picnic, September 19, 2015

Holiday Dinner, December 12, 2015

Annual Chili Cook-Off, January 23, 2016

Line Dance Evening, April 22, 2016

Members also helped with the Heart & Hand Auction in October.

Finance Team

Leader: Walt Jesteadt

Members: Shelton Hendricks, Louise Jeffrey, Clyde Kramer, Bill Ross, John Wagner, Tony Host, Carol Prine, Christopher Schmidt

Activities & Projects — 2015/2016:

The Finance Team has responsibility for advising the Board, the Ministry Team and the Treasurer on the financial functions of the church and assists the senior staff in carrying out specific functions. Walt Jesteadt continued to serve as Treasurer as well as Finance Chair. Work completed under both headings will be summarized here, but finances for the year and a proposed budget for the 2016-2017 year will be presented in a separate report. The Sarah Joslyn Society and Fundraising are also covered in separate reports.

- During the past year, Bill Ross continued to perform many church accounting functions including the payroll. Catharine Dixon continued handling most of the data entry and took over some accounting functions. Clyde Kramer handled disbursements. Walt Jesteadt handled contribution statements, monthly reports to the Board and automatic withdrawals through Vanco.
- Contribution Statements were mailed in July, October, January and April. The January mailing for tax purposes is required by law. The April mailing provided information on the status of pledges before the end of the current church year as well as information on new pledges. We continued to email contribution statements to 75 households that gave us permission to do so.
- The Preserve Our Building Fund campaign was again held in January/February, with the help of Jamie Alexander and Louise Jeffrey. The fund total increased from \$51,924 in February 2015 to \$58,758 in February 2016.
- The members who pay their pledges by monthly automatic deposits handled by Vanco increased to 38 during the year. All Vanco contributors were contacted during the stewardship campaign to ensure that Vanco transfers in May would be consistent with new pledges. Our Excel summary of Vanco participants was updated.
- A \$165,000 bequest from Katherine McClure, combined with other bequests and successful management of our operating budget has given us cash reserves of approximately \$500,000. A joint meeting of the Finance Team and the Capital Trustees in October resulted in a recommendation to the Board to invest \$200,000 in the UUA Common Endowment Fund. This will be completed by the time of the annual meeting.
- Clyde Kramer continued coming to the church office once a week to handle disbursements.

Foyer Improvement Project — 2015/2016

Submitted by Marie Sedlacek

The foyer of the church was renovated to create a welcoming first impression for visitors and members. Dean Christensen pushed to have the project completed with an initial donation of \$20,000. The Board of Trustees approved funding up to an additional \$12,000. Additional donations were received to cover construction services or to purchase specific items. Member input was solicited at meetings in April and July of 2015. Design options were shared and a final design selected.

Demolition started September 14, 2015 with the removal of existing cabinetry and the repairing and repainting of the walls. Custom wainscoting, built-in coat racks, storage areas, and a nametag display cabinet were designed and installed. All wood molding and trim were made to match existing trim found in the church. New walk-off type carpet was installed. The entry doors were repaired and painted and period door hardware installed. Antique furniture and period reproduction furniture was purchased. The existing Sack-Back arm chairs in the sanctuary were sent out for repair and refinishing. The chancel table was repaired and the top refinished. Protective glass was purchased and added to all tables and cabinet tops.

The result is a beautiful new foyer which now enhances our lovely sanctuary.

Church note: Our sincere thanks to Marie Sedlacek who spent countless hours designing and managing the project and to the following craftsmen: Tim Earl, custom carpentry; Traco, Inc., painting; Don's Refinishing Service, furniture repair and refinishing; Nebraska/Iowa Door Services, door hardware.

Donations will be formally recognized as part of the project.

FUNdraising Team

Leaders: Donna Neff and Kathi Oliver, partnered with Fellowship Team

Team Members: More than 50 auction volunteers

Activities & Projects — 2015-2016:

This year's operating budget assumed \$17,000 from fundraising, holding last year's level. We successfully reached that goal, contributing \$17,467 to the budget as of the end of February.

Chili Cook-Off profit yielded about \$500 and sale of gift cards added some income, but the majority came from our big annual event, the Halloween Heart & Hand Auction Party. Held Friday October 23, 2015, people attended, many in costume, to bid on 162 donated items, concerts, dinners, services and fun activities. The events filled the calendar nearly every weekend from November through May. Billing post-auction again worked quite well. Besides generous donors and buyers, it took over 50 volunteers to pull it off, with special thanks to Kabin Thomas, our emcee and auctioneer, the Fellowship Team, and Walt Jesteadt and Carolyn McNamara for heading set-up/logistics. Auction related tasks now spread year-round for us, including billings, monitoring, post-auction open seat sales, etc.

We discontinued scrip sales this year because of effort relative to profit and ethical concerns about particular merchants. We end the year with a new venture: preparing for the church to participate for the first time in Omaha Gives! on May 25, a community wide fundraiser for non-profits.

Holland Lecture Series Committee

Members: Dick Holland, Steve Hutchinson (Chairman), Dave Richardson, Rev. Frank Rivas, Stephen Peters, Joe Sisson, Mike Klug, Wendy Hessler, Kim Dunovan and Shelton Hendricks

Activities — 2015/2016:

The Lecture Committee sponsors two lectures per year, one in the spring and one in the fall. To date, 22 lectures have been sponsored.

On September 24, 2015, a lecture titled “Your Voting Rights, 50 Years after Selma” was given by Dale Ho, Director of the ACLU’s Voting Rights Project, which is dedicated to defending the freedom of all Americans to vote. He is an adjunct professor of law at Brooklyn Law School and NYU School of Law. Prior to joining the ACLU, he was Assistant Counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. He is a graduate of Princeton and the Yale Law School.

On May 11, 2016, Dr. Naomi Oreskes is scheduled to present a lecture titled “The American Denial of Climate Warning.” Dr. Oreskes is Professor of the History of Science and Affiliated Professor of Earth and Planetary Sciences at Harvard University. Previously she was an administrator and faculty member at The University of California, San Diego. She is the author of *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming* and *The Collapse of Western Civilization: A View from the Future*.

The Committee funds its activities through contributions by Dick Holland.

Hospitality Teams

Coordinator: Kim Callaghan

Coordinator as of May 1: Carolyn McNamara

Team Leaders: Louise Jeffrey, Kim Callaghan, Janet West, Sandy Host, Kim Dunovan, Joe and Lori Schaaf, Jack Round, Kay Lynn Goldner, Bill Ross and Ron Withem

The Hospitality Teams concept began in 2014 as a new way to approach the Sunday morning tasks we are all familiar with. The goal is to provide opportunities for each congregation member to help serve the congregation and support the church services; to belong to a team that works together on a regular basis and take a turn in its leadership; to learn the work that is required to bring our services together, share the knowledge with other team members, and help improve the process; and to become an integral part of welcoming all newcomers to our church.

It takes about 108 volunteers (nine teams of twelve people each) to make Hospitality Teams work. The teams are purposely large so that team members who may have to be gone for work or are traveling on the Sunday that their team is scheduled, can be gone without disrupting the smooth flow of the team's work. Currently, the average team has eight members but more are needed. Each team serves six times per year — once every two months. Four teams serve one Sunday during each of the odd numbered months (September, November, etc.) and four other teams serve one Sunday during each of the even numbered months (October, December, etc.). A fifth team serves each time that there is a fifth Sunday in a month (generally 4 times per year). Team Coordinator Kim Callaghan is the conduit between the individuals and teams that create our Sunday services and the Hospitality Teams that serve on any given Sunday.

Serving on a Hospitality Team takes about one hour and it only happens six times per year. Some people come in early to set up and some people stay a bit late for clean-up. Because everyone works together, nobody has to spend lots of extra time. Tasks include greeting congregants and visitors when they enter the church; taking up the offering; preparing coffee and refreshments; answering questions and giving directions; tidying up after each service; visiting with newcomers and helping them feel at home. All of the tasks are documented and introductory training is offered. Team members rotate through the tasks so everyone can do every job.

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Hospitality Team Leaders mainly do team coordination. Team Leaders receive information about what is planned for the services from the Hospitality Team Coordinator and share it with their team members. The Team Leader checks to see who will be able to attend on Sunday and schedules who will perform each of the various roles. The tasks are rotated until everyone has a chance to become familiar with each one.

It has been rewarding and fun and we hope you will volunteer for a Hospitality Team and join us!

House & Grounds Team

Leader: Pierce Carpenter

Activities & Projects — 2015/2016:

Sharon Conlon, with the help of member volunteers, maintained the church garden and grounds beautifully. Dean Christensen spearheaded the installation of the sanctuary light fixtures and assisted with roof problems. Dean Christensen and Marie Sedlacek, with help, renovated the church foyer and upgraded the furniture. Floyd Prine worked on several electrical jobs, most notably outlets in the offices. Jack Perry assisted with various plumbing issues which included the sump pumps and the dishwasher and worked to extend the life of our front stair way and did some painting. Bob Perrin has been assisting with the elevator pit railing project and the west stairwell railing. Bill Ross took care of our computers and network for another year. Pierce Carpenter recently took over as House & Grounds leader from Dave Rosser who has continued on in an advisory and assistance capacity. Many others assisted during the year with various projects. House & Grounds is grateful for the efforts of all of these individuals and those who remain unnamed.

Membership Team

Chair: Beth Conover

Co-Chairs: Barb Ross and Carolyn McNamara

New Leaders as of May 1: Tom & Caitlin Seguin

Members: Jaime Alexander, Lois Norris, Janet West, Ron Withem, Judith Wright, Ellen Shurson, Vanessa Timberlake, Tom Seguin, Caitlin Seguin, Beccy Hatcher, Donna Tubach-Davis

Activities — 2015-2016:

- Recruitment and orientation of the very fabulous Carrie Helmberger, part-time membership coordinator. Continued to work with Carrie throughout the year to assist with triaging requests to the coordinator. Please see Carrie's report for additional information on her activities, and the number of visitors contacted.
- Carolyn and Barb gathered data on number of visitors and members at church services; Vanessa entered into PowerChurch. Carrie and Catharine Dixon used the information to mail new visitor letters, make visitor nametags, and email frequent visitors.
- Worked on process by which people join the church, including making sure they get a new member packet, pledge form, and interest survey.
- Carolyn coordinated a new member celebration, attended by the minister, board members, and team members (along with new members, of course).
- Barb wrote several articles for First Unitarian publications on activities of the membership team.
- Carrie contacted church members who are not currently on a hospitality team to ask them to participate. Carrie also referred all new members to teams specific to their interest, and also to hospitality team coordinator.
- Ellen contacted all new members to offer to write an article about them for the church newsletter.
- Caitlin made a spectacular poster for the church team fair, in an attempt to attract new members to the team.
- Carolyn set up a permanent "visitors" table in the common room with information on new members, brochures, and invitations to UU & You. Table staffed by team members during coffee hour.
- Unitarian Universalism & You (UU & You): Jaime Alexander and Janet West hosted monthly sessions for visitors interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism and our church, with attendance ranging from 1 to 13 people. Caitlin and Tom, along with Carrie and Beth initiated process of expanding this popular class into additional sessions.
- Many membership team members attended the all-day forum with Lori Emison Clair, and met with Lori afterward to address questions and issues specific to our team.

Nominating Committee

Nominating Committee Members: Mary Thomas, Kim Callaghan, Molly Dewell, Nadine Keith, David Olson, Joe Schaaf. As last year's Board President, Louise Jeffrey convened the Nominating Committee in January 2016.

Consistent with our by-laws, the Nominating Committee solicited congregational input to identify members qualified and willing to serve in elected positions, and then selected candidates. The committee thanks those who have expressed a willingness to serve in these positions:

President-Elect: **Alan Vovolka**
Members, Board of Trustees: **Joe Schaaf** and **Floyd Prine**
Trustee of the Capital Trust: **Dean Christensen**
Members of the Nominating Committee: **Carol Ramsey** and **Ben Wallace**

Further nominations will be accepted from the floor at the Annual Meeting immediately preceding the election by qualified members of the congregation.

The Nominating Committee also solicited congregational input to award and recognize volunteers, and to select the Unitarian of the Year. The Unitarian of the Year is revealed at the Annual Meeting. Last year's recipient was **Ben Wallace**.

Annual Awards:

Heritage Award — For significant contributions to preserving, understanding, and celebrating our Unitarian Universalist history: **Linda Parker**

Religious Education Award — For outstanding achievement and excellence in religious growth and learning: **Sheri Conner**

Keeping the Faith Award — For keeping the UU faith alive in the community and touching the lives of congregation and community members in a positive way: **Shelton Hendricks**

Social Justice Award — For witnessing to the ideals of social justice and responsibility so important to our UU heritage: **Rene Harper**

Youth Social Justice Award Youth: **Noah Giron**

Unsung Unitarian Universalist Award — For a lifetime of actions that inspire, support and express Unitarian Universalism: **Walt Jesteadt**

Thank you to everyone who helped in this process with suggestions and preparation of materials.

Office Team

Church Administrator: Catharine Dixon

Leader: Carolyn McNamara

Members:

Rae Barry/Cassi Moucka	Wayside Pulpit
Kim Callaghan	Volunteer Coordinator /Coffee Supplies
Linda Hruska	Orders of Worship
Clyde Kramer	Accounting
Carolyn McNamara	Orders of Worship/Office Shopper
Barb Ross	Database
Bill Ross	Information Technology
Dave Rosser	Office Assistant/Sound System
Vanessa Timberlake	Attendance Records

Friday Volunteers: Kim Callaghan, Audrey and Dale Freyer, Kay Lynn Goldner, Lana Hammel, Linda Hruska, Debbie Hunsberger, Frank McKee, Evelyn Whitehill, Pat Will

The Flame Proofreaders: Lana Hammel, Scott Kemper, Cyndi Nather

The Flame Folders: Howard Bolton, Kim Callaghan, Shelton Hendricks, Debbie Hunsberger

Activities & Projects — 2015/2016:

In addition to the ongoing commitments listed above, team members staff the office when needed, undertake special projects, organize, file, design, research, edit, proofread, revise, reformat, enter data, copy, recycle, and clean as time permits.

Kim Callaghan does a great job performing as Volunteer Coordinator. She schedules and trains a team of dedicated volunteers who come in on Fridays to assemble the orders of worship, restock and organize pew racks, and prepare the sanctuary and foyer for Sunday services. The volunteers also fold, seal and prepare the monthly *Flame* for mailing. We are very grateful for such a devoted volunteer staff.

The church's information technology applications are growing. The church now has seven PCs in use and these will be updated to Windows 10 this summer. Two Apple computers are also in use for music and streaming applications. We also maintain an Ethernet network and three WiFi networks.

In March, we welcomed Cassi Moucka as the new caretaker of the Wayside Pulpit.

In April, the office was thrilled to welcome a new photocopier which is smaller yet faster and more efficient.

This year, Catharine redesigned the look of both *The Flame* and the enews. We now have almost 600 people who receive the weekly enews and the emailed monthly newsletter.

Partner Church Team

Leader: Janet West

Members: Nadine Keith, Anne Knapp, Ron Knapp, Evy Rosser, Dave Olson, Val Murray, Bob Hess and Mary Jo Stoll

Projects — 2015/2016:

- To raise \$1,320 each year for the Unitarian church and village in Firtosmartonos, Transylvania, Romania. This money is used by the village minister, Rev. Katalin Szasz-Cserey, to help maintain the village church and to help with various church/village activities such as the Sunday school, a youth summer camp, and the women's needlework group.
- To raise \$1,200 to provide scholarships to some of the village youth who are either attending high school or college. In 2014/15, this money was distributed to nine young people. Because there is no village high school, the youth must board in the cities in which the high schools are located. The Women's Alliance provides \$400 of the \$1,200 of scholarship money that is sent.
- To provide information to the members and friends of First Unitarian Church about our partner church and village and Transylvanian Unitarianism.
- To recruit members and friends of First Unitarian Church to travel to Transylvania and our partner village.

Activities — 2015/2016:

- The Team participated in the Water Ceremony on November 29, 2015.
- Each year in December, the Team is designated as the Share the Plate recipient.
- On March 20, 2016, the Team served Transylvanian/Hungarian food and decorated the Common Room with items from Transylvania to acquaint members and friend with First Unitarian Church's partner church and village and the Unitarian heritage of Transylvania.

Sarah Joslyn Society

Chair: Dixie Lemon

Luncheon Committee Members: Deb Duggan, Kay Lynn Goldner, Sandy Host, Carolyn McNamara, Lois Norris, Judith Wright

The Sarah Joslyn Society was formed in 2004 to thank those members of the congregation who have stated that they are leaving a bequest to the church. This year we recognized new member Dave Richardson with a slate and the thanks of the congregation. Shelton Hendricks, who had joined the year before, was also recognized because he was out of town at the time of last year's meeting. This brings the total number of members to seventy-five, eleven of whom are deceased.

These are the dedicated church members who have planted a tree so that others may enjoy the shade:

Jaime Alexander	Joe Hoagbin	Cella Quinn
Jacqueline Anderegg	Dick Holland	Jim Rogers
Anonymous I	Mary Holland	Raija Rogers
Anonymous II	Betty Holloway	Ellen Shurson
Anonymous III	John Hruska	Jim Simon
Bill Bruns	Debbie Hunsberger	Kim Simon
Sandi Bruns	Louise Jeffrey	Liz Stawycznyj
Linda Buehlmann	Walt Jesteadt	Gretchen Thomas
Eddith Buis	Bob Jones	John Thomas
Sharon Conlon	Diane Jones	John Wagner
Carol Christensen	Dick Joslin	Elaine Wells
Dean Christensen	Anne Knapp	Janet West
Deb Duggan	Ron Knapp	Evelyn Whitehill
Tim Duggan	Dixie Lemon	Jim Wigton
Olive Erickson	Harriet Major	Judy Wigton
Margot Fetrow	Katherine Bester McClure	Pat Will
Richard Fetrow	Carolyn McNamara	Edith Wilson
Audrey Freyer	Donna Neff	Sid Wilson
Dale Freyer	Dave Nicklin	Diane Withem
Larry Goeser	Ruth Nicklin	Ron Withem
John Goldner	Frank Norris	Judith Wright
Kay Lynn Goldner	Lois Norris	
Megan Gustafson	Linda Parker	
Lana Hammel	Bob Perrin	
Jack Heidel	Jack Perry	
Shelton Hendricks	Yvonne Price	
Wendy Hessler		

Stewardship Committee — 2016

Co-Chairs: Mary Kay Peters and Peg Pidgeon

Assistant Co-Chairs: Kim Dunovan, Carolyn McNamara, Louise Jeffrey, Sandy Host, Christopher Schmidt, Kay Lynn Goldner, Barb Ross, Judith Wright, Lois Norris, Carol Prine, and Diane Withem.

The 2016-17 Stewardship Drive kicked off this year in mid-January with new committee members and a newly proposed budget. On February 9th the Board approved the new budget which asked for a \$10,000.00 increase from Stewardship. Amid the concerns we felt over the required increase, plans were implemented and the team got to work.

The month long drive really began with the “Pillar Party,” hosted by John and Kay Lynn Goldner on February 28 at their condo party room. Approximately 25 attendees met to visit, enjoy conversation along with appetizers and cocktails provided by the Stewardship Committee members. After a brief message from both John Goldner and Rev. Frank, over 62% of this year’s Stewardship goal was pledged by attendees.

The next steps included the preparation and mailing of the pledge packets and the weekly reminders by inspirational speakers including Board President Jack Round, Ryan Cook, Harriet Major, and Carol Cronin.

The month was rounded out by the all-church Fabulous Fiesta planned by Mary Kay and Peg. The festive occasion featured a taco bar and we celebrated members and friends with meaningful photos of service and involvement on Judith Wright’s beautiful centerpieces. The drive was completed through calls to members and friends who had not yet pledged. Callers included Ron and Diane Withem, Louise Jeffrey, Walt Jesteadt, David Richardson, Jaime Alexander, Maria Wallace, and Kay Lynn Goldner. To date, we are happy to report we reached our pledge goal of \$260,000

Sunday Services Live Video Streaming and Archives

Submitted by Troy Jensen

Activities — 2015/2016:

Initial research into and evaluation of live video streaming of services began in earnest January 2015. The effort was based upon the concept of using iPod cameras and an iPad video production solution which was a cost-effective method to film and upload video directly to YouTube for distribution. We spent several months learning the software and testing various camera placements, lighting efforts, sound board integration, and Internet wifi bandwidth requirements. And we tested the early service versus the late service before identifying and implementing a solution that would work for the Early Morning Risers to avoid music license violations when performing copyrighted material during services.

After a brief interruption to the effort in the summer of 2015, we worked through the majority of the issues in the fall. We increased the church Internet bandwidth, configured a private video wifi network to limit bandwidth constraints from other traffic on the network, refined the camera placement and audio balance, and added title slides throughout the video based on the Order of Worship each week.

In October 2015, we started publicly posting live streams of the services each week to the firstuomaha.org website and archiving the broadcasts. We still struggled with periodic wifi interference causing hiccups in the video stream. However, each week the video tended to improve as we continued to make refinements. During the first quarter of 2016, we averaged about 20 views of the online service, either live or archived, each week. The livestream quality has remained consistently good.

To make it consistently great, we are currently transitioning to a new production system and targeting the end of May for it to be fully implemented. Using traditional video cameras with significant optical zoom directly connected to a laptop running new video production software and a hard-wired Internet connection in the organ loft, we hope to bypass the wifi issues we've experienced and double or possibly triple the resolution of the live video we are currently posting to the website.

We are now recruiting volunteers to take turns filming and producing the video during services. It only requires one individual each week. But to ensure sustainability of the livestream video broadcast, the church needs more than one individual available to implement the live video from week to week. Every step of the production process is documented, so there aren't any real technical skills required. Everyone can help make the live video streaming an ongoing success.

Tolerant Atheists Group

Leader: Jaime Alexander

Members: 52 people have placed their email address on the TAG email list while meeting attendance has varied from about 15 to 35

Activities & Projects — 2015/2016:

The last year has produced a transformative "Coming of Age" for the Tolerant Atheists Group (TAG). June, of 2015 marked TAG's completion of five years in existence. A four-month video series on the history of "Free Thinking" filled the fall. This spring's programs feature two presentations with discussions by Minister Emeritus Ron Knapp and two by "Visiting Adjunct Professor" Doug Wagner. TAG's email contact is tag@firstuomaha.org.

Over the summer, the Tolerant Atheists Steering Team (TAST) was formed to share the load and assure TAG's future. The members of the Steering Team are Barb Ross, Dave Richardson, Doug Wagner, Ellen Shurson, Jack Perry, Jaime Alexander, Jason Jones, Linda Parker, Louise Jeffrey, Sheri Conner and Terri Lynn Brewer.

Women's Alliance

Chair: Nellie Chenoweth

Treasurer, Reservations and Publicity: Kathi Oliver

Food: Barb Dewell, Lois Norris, Abby Borgmann, Ann Van Hoff

Fund Raising and Bake Sale: Vanessa Timberlake

Programs: Kim Callaghan and Nadine Keith

Education Fund Committee (5 members): Nellie Chenoweth, Vanessa Timberlake, Janet West, Nadine Keith, Kathi Oliver

Reader: Maria Wallace

Set-up: Louise Jeffrey, Daniele Reichert, Judith Wright, many others

Clean-up: Vanessa Timberlake, Louise Jeffrey, Barb Dewell, Lois Norris, many others

Table Decorations: Daniele Reichert

Wine Bearers: Donna Neff and Sheri Connor

Bulletin board: Kathi Oliver

The Women's Alliance invites women, and those who identify themselves as women, to a monthly get-together that includes social time, dinner, and a program/presentation. Again, our presentations this year were outstanding and informative.

We saw a steady attendance throughout the year; about 30-35 women attended regularly with new attendees visiting monthly. We again saw a return of previous Women's Alliance Members.

Each month Women's Alliance members welcomed a different speaker.

September: Nadine and Sharon shared their experiences from the UUA General Assembly.

October: We were visited by members of a Tae-Kwon-Do group and were taught self-defense techniques.

November: The Women's Alliance group was visited by Joni, a member of PFLAG. She presented the women with a brief lesson of what terms men and women should be using when addressing transgender individuals. November was also our annual Thanksgiving Bake Sale. We raised \$616, and all proceeds to this bake sale go towards our Merritt Education Fund.

December: We had our annual white elephant gift exchange. Some great gifts were exchanged, as well as one that will (more than likely) make the rounds for the next few years. We also collected supplies and clothing donations for Y.E.S. (Youth Emergency Services).

January: The Merritt Education Fund was able to support Ben Wallace and 10 delegates to the Creating Change Conference in Chicago, IL.

February: The program was presented by Amy Campagna. Amy works for NE Wildlife Rehab, Inc., an organization whose mission is to rehabilitate native Nebraska wildlife and migratory birds for return to the wild.

March: The program was presented by Doris Moore, founder and CEO of the non-profit behavioral healthcare organization Center for Holistic Development.

April: The speaker for April was Rhonda Stansberry, a retired *Omaha World Herald* reporter and garden writer. She discussed Master Gardeners and Butterfly Gardens.

May: Our final meeting of the season had a talk presented by Bill Kuhl from Second Unitarian Church. We made a small donation to Y.E.S. instead of collecting money for dinner and the education fund.

Worship Arts Team

Leader: Megan Gustafson

Members: Denise Allain, Royal Carleton, Nellie Chenoweth, *Rene Harper, *Stan Harper, *Bob McMeen, Dave Richardson, Anne Rivas, Maria Wallace, *Kate Wiig, *Pat Will (*Music Representatives)

Activities — 2015/2016:

The mission of the Worship Arts Team is to assure quality Sunday morning worship programming. We plan Sunday services when our minister is not in the pulpit and provide lay leaders to assist in Sunday worship for both the minister and guests.

It has been a very workman-like year for the team. We do our work, and do it with few fireworks. Our focus for the past year has been to provide as much Sunday morning programming as possible from within the congregation. This resulted in some unique opportunities for sharing services and cooperative worship led by Worship Associates and other church groups. We will continue in this effort, in large part to help avoid guest speaker fees.

The summer calendar is already filled. We look forward to welcoming two more members and one church friend to the pulpit, as well as several returning guest ministers.

Young Adult Group

Leader: Anne Rodriguez

Members: Anne Rodriguez, Molly Dewell, Maria Wallace, Kathi Oliver, Abby Cape, Tom and Caitlin Seguin, Collin and Beccy Hatcher, Nolan DeVries, Jason Jones, Payton Pearson, Claude Matthews, Billie Grant, and Shay Valentine

Activities and Projects — 2015/2016:

Friday Fun Night (formerly Young Adult Game Night) on the third Friday of every month.

Young Adult Discussion Group on the fourth Sunday of every month.

Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU)

Submitted by Shawne Coonfare and Ben Wallace

Leaders/Coordinators: Ben Wallace and Shawne Coonfare (First Unitarian)

Youth Advisors:

First Unitarian - Ryan Cook, Bethany Murphy

Second Unitarian - Tom Rundquist, Joe White

Youth Members:

Seniors: Jared Kolok, Rhianna Giron, Shiraz de Vreede

Juniors: Noah Giron, Ariel Alai, Alan Godfrey

Sophomores: Gale Callaghan, Samuel Peterson, Sabrina Short, Jenna Hutchinson, Genevieve Lee-Regier

Freshmen: Izzy Short, Alex Toth, Chloe Coonfare, Anne Gallagher, Will Archer, Erin Stokes, Charlotte

Simon, Gabe Knutson

Eighth Graders: Arian Alai, Dillon Jenkins, Jacob Calhoun

Seventh Graders: Lilly McEvoy, Izzy Coonfare

Guests also joined the group occasionally.

Group Summary:

Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU) is for youth in grades 7-12 and is a joint youth group between First and Second Unitarian Churches of Omaha. They meet on Wednesday nights at First Unitarian Church. The YRUU year runs in conjunction with the school year (September – May).

The goals of YRUU are to:

- Grow life-long Unitarian Universalists
- Provide worship, celebration and rites of passage for UU youth
- Learn about the traditions and heritage of Unitarian Universalism
- Develop personal growth, relationship building & leadership skills for youth
- Help youth to develop a social conscience and learn to be agents of change, as a group and individually, in the world
- Develop continuity and foster communication between age levels of youth within the program
- Foster tolerance, understanding and acceptance of diversity.

Youth Adult Committee: One focus of YRUU is a youth-leading structure within the group. The Youth Adult Committee (YAC) is comprised of all youth interested in taking leadership roles, youth advisors, and interested parents. The YAC utilizes the feedback gained from the full representation of youth and parents to plan and organize programming with the structure of “The 6 Pillars of Balanced Youth Ministry” (from the UUA Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries) — Building Community, Social Action, Worship, Learning, Leadership, Congregational Involvement. The YAC meets between one and three times monthly in order to ensure effective leadership for the YRUU, to plan weekly programming, events, and activities, and to formalize the structure of youth leadership within YRUU. In the past the YAC has had officers but this year the youth chose to forego officer positions and instead focus on all members of the group working together to plan and execute our programming and events.

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2015 – 2016 YRUU Activity Summary: We learned and had some amazing discussions this year including learning and discussing important topics. A great focus of the year was building inclusive groups and communities. Through the generous support of the congregations and many fund-raising efforts, YRUU was able to participate in programming with Inclusive Communities.

Inclusive Communities Program Activities included:

- A day-long workshop on “Creating Inclusive Communities” for all youth, parents, and church and youth leaders
 - A year-long internship for two youth (Noah Giron of 1st Unitarian and Sabrina Short of 2nd Unitarian),
 - A four-day intensive residential program called IncluCity attended by two advisors and 12 high school youth.

Other YRUU activities included:

- Youth-led discussions on science, political correctness, and discrimination topics
- Multiple music worships with youth-selected songs on various themes and a discussion about why the music they selected was meaningful to them
- Trust-building and leadership exercises led by parent Justin Short
- Former advisor Mary Anne Chisholm facilitating an exercise to decorate a metal sculpture, which was featured as a part of the Transgender Day Of Remembrance (TDOR) ceremony on Friday November 20, 2015. The sculpture was auctioned at the event and all proceeds were donated by the YRUU to the Open Arms TransYouth Group (www.openarmsomaha.com)
- A letter-writing campaign for the National “It Gets Better” Project (www.itgetsbetter.org) supporting LGBT Youth
- Viewing of Documentaries from the Teaching Tolerance curriculum (<http://www.tolerance.org>) on bullying as well as how youth efforts played an important role in the march on Selma and the Civil Rights movement
- A panel discussion on sexual orientation and gender identity with guest panelists from our First and Second U as well as the larger Omaha metro area
- Participation in the “Dollars for Dodge Ball Fundraiser” supporting the Family Housing Advisory Services program to help youth aging out of foster care
- Attendance by three youth and an advisor at a Youth Conference in Rochester, Minnesota focused on leadership and community building

This year’s YRUU activities ended with a potluck at First Unitarian (a celebration and honoring of one another and time spent together over the year), as well as a youth service for the entire congregation, which is youth-led and focused (on Mother’s Day weekend).

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Other Programs typically facilitated by YRUU (the facilitation of these programs may change as the Transition Team looks at the future of where these programs fit inside of the RE structure and Omaha UU community):

- Coming of Age: Unitarian Universalist teenagers 9th Grade or older usually join their congregations with a special "Coming of Age" ceremony. This ceremony is often preceded by a year-long curriculum helping them to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and articulate their own beliefs. The Coming of Age ceremony usually features the youth reading their statements of personal belief (credo statements) to the congregation (typically incorporated into the Youth Service at the end of the year in May or June). This year, due to conflicting school events, no youth chose to participate.
- Our Whole Lives (OWL): The OWL program helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior. It equips participants with accurate, age-appropriate information in six subject areas: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture. Grounded in a holistic view of sexuality, OWL not only provides facts about anatomy and human development, but also helps participants clarify their values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality. Our current OWL program is a 26 week/lesson cycle, and the current curriculum, as well as advisor training, is tailored for youth 7th grade and older. Parent preview and consent is required prior to participation. (We did not have a session this year as typically we offer this curriculum every other year.)
- Bridging: The developing Bridging Program is a time for introspection and sharing for graduating high school seniors with peers in the YRUU community and adult mentors/ advisors. It gives the youth a chance to reflect on their spiritual path in a meaningful way, with respect to this significant time of transition from being youth to young adults, as well as what that means for the next journey in life.

Strategic Efforts: As the spring semester started, youth and adults came together for a planning session facilitated by the DREs from First and Second U to look at what policies were in place for our continued partnership and the sustainable planning for future adult advisor and coordinator roles. A Transition Team was formed, representing the commitment of both congregations toward recognition and support of a sustainable and well-supported YRUU as an important ministry of the churches and a place for youth to learn, grow and be in community together. The group agreed that this support should include financial and physical support, a well-planned out process of advisor recruitment, vetting and selection, as well as processes such as advisor training, ongoing mentoring and support, and a continuous succession plan. We know that the future of the thriving YRUU program and the achievement of its goals to provide a safe, transparent, inclusive, inviting, and strong environment for our youth depends on everyone working together. The critical role that active youth and parent involvement and voices plays along with leadership and support from the DREs, Ministers, Board Members, and volunteers will ensure that we continue to create a strong, more sustained future for YRUU.

Appendix Contents

New Members

Weddings and Unions Held in the Church

Treasurer's Report

2016-2017 Budget

Bequests

Staff

New Members since May 1, 2015

Lita Magisana 5/3/2015

Mark Loscutoff 5/3/2015

Carol Prine 5/31/2015

Ray Walden 6/4/2015

Candi Walden 6/4/2015

Stephen Davis 6/7/2015

Donna Tubach-Davs 6/7/2015

Bill Huntington 9/27/2015

Beccy Hatcher 10/11/2015

Collin Hatcher 10/11/2015

Dee Otte 11/08/2015

Anna Selmecki 11/22/2015

Denise Allain 1/17/2016

Catherine Plumlee 2/14/2016

Daniel Byrd 2/28/2016

Diana Byrd 2/28/2016

Kendall Anderson 3/13/2016

Andrea Hayes 3/13/2016

Martin Hayes 3/13/2016

Michael McCaughan 3/13/2016

Kathy Alexander 3/27/2016

Susan Traudt 5/3/2016

Weddings and Unions Held in the Church since May 1, 2015

Murphy/Cook
5/16/2015

Bort/Thomas
5/23/2015

Centarri/Armetta
6/5/2015

Buennemeyer/Sandall
6/13/2015

Heaverlo/Palois
6/27/2015

Guidry/Greco
7/25/2015

Mosley/Brown
7/26/2015

Davis/Menage
8/8/2015

Schermerhorn/Jansen
8/15/15

Warga/Wilcher
8/22/2015

Hansen/Schmidt
8/29/2015

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(weddings continued)

Pick/Matlock

9/6/2015

Lamm/Behrns

9/16/2015

Matzen/Null

10/3/2015

Liao/Beck

10/17/2015

Custer/Bone

10/24/2015

Thomassen/Rippe

1/16/2016

Strika/Martins

3/4/2016

McKillip/Buresh

4/9/2016

Van Putten/Nellis

4/16/2016

Comments on the 2014/2015 Treasurer's Report and 2015/2016 Proposed Budget

Recent History

This year marked our fifth in a row with an end-of-year surplus, after several years in a row with large deficits. Our budgets have been accurate in assumptions regarding income, but have tended to over-estimate our true expenses and that was true again this year. Given our many functions and programs managed by a mix of full-time staff, part-time staff and volunteers, it is not surprising that we over estimate our need for financial support in some areas. We try to anticipate needs in all areas and give leaders budgets that are adequate to meet their needs. End-of-year surpluses are transferred to our reserve account. When necessary, we have proposed that a portion of the end-of-year surplus be carried over to be used as income for the next year. This has allowed us to have a lower goal for the stewardship campaign than we might otherwise have while assuring everyone that we will be able to meet our needs throughout the year.

Results for 2015-16

On June 10, 2015, the official end of last year's stewardship campaign, which began as usual on March 1st, we had total pledges of \$250,453. We budgeted \$245,000 in pledge contributions for the year that ended on April 30, 2016 because we were at about that level at the time of the annual meeting. We assumed \$5,500 in carryover from the previous year to make the budget work. Total pledge contributions were \$248,426 and income was above budget in several other categories. The net result was that we did not actually need the \$5,500 in carryover and were \$586 over budget for income without it. Expenses were \$9,171 below budget. Several categories were above budget, but we had large savings in the Building and Grounds category because of lower utility costs and because we did not spend as much from our maintenance fund, which covers the cost of miscellaneous repairs during the year. We were also under budget in Program Expenses, a category that includes religious services, religious education, and some of our outreach programs. The net result is that we finished the year with a surplus of \$9,757, without use of any surplus funds from the prior year.

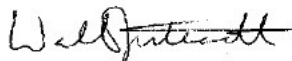
Stewardship Campaign

The goal for the stewardship campaign this spring was \$260,000, an increase of \$15,000 or 6% over last year. As of May 10, 2016, we had 139 pledges for the new church year totaling \$260,281. The number of pledges is down slightly from last year, but the total is a new record. There is a separate report from the Stewardship team.

Proposed Budget

The proposed budget assumes pledge contributions of \$260,000 for the coming year and use of \$2,875 from the 2015-2016 surplus as additional income to balance the budget. If our expenses continue to be somewhat lower than projected, we will not need those funds. The budget assumes that the Membership Coordinator will be supported from a non-budget growth account, but if expenses are lower than expected, we may be able to absorb that cost as well. Our cash reserves have increased this year due to a large bequest and we have sufficient non-budget funds to meet any need short of a major building expansion.

Respectfully submitted,

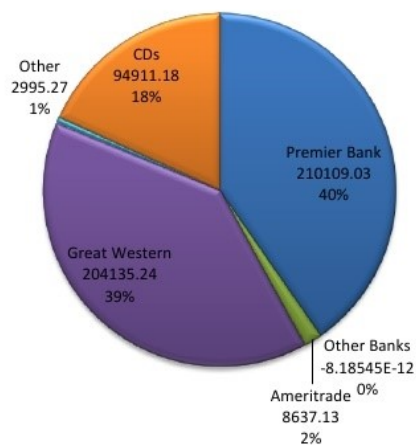


FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH TREASURER'S REPORT
ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING - MAY 15, 2016

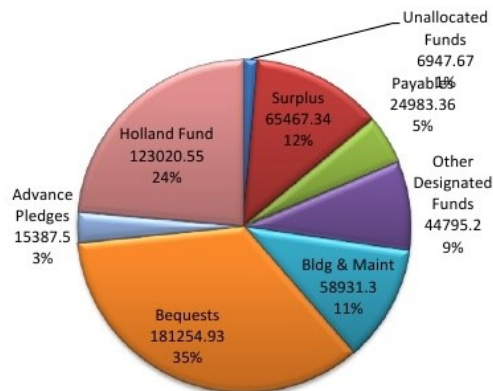
	2016/2017 Proposed Budget	Change From Last Year's Budget	2015/2016 Last Year's Budget	2015/2016 Actual Results
Income:				
Pledged Contributions	260,000	15,000	245,000	248,426
Capital Trust Investment Income	13,000	1,000	12,000	12,817
Fund Raising	17,000	-	17,000	19,201
Use of Facilities	13,000	2,000	11,000	12,174
Plate Collections	5,000	-	5,000	4,992
Non-Pledged Contributions	8,000	-	8,000	7,180
Other Income - Interest	600	100	500	659
Other Income - Misc	400	(100)	500	593
NICO Rental Income	-	(8,820)	8,820	5,880
Change For Change	1,000	-	1,000	485
Share the Plate	5,000	-	5,000	7,000
Carry Forward from Prev Year	2,875	(2,125)	5,000	
Total Income	325,875	7,055	318,820	319,406
Expenses:				
Minister	112,022	3,785	108,237	105,144
Office & Administration	79,337	6,499	72,838	77,247
House & Grounds	32,379	(3,678)	36,057	25,632
Religious Services (incl music)	30,392	(135)	30,527	27,534
Religious Education	39,550	1,602	37,948	35,556
Denominational Affairs	17,845	-	17,845	18,605
Discretionary & Team Funds	14,350	(1,018)	15,368	19,930
Total Expenses	325,875	7,055	318,820	309,648
Surplus or (Deficit)	(0)		(0)	9,757

Summary of Non-Budget Accounts as of April 30, 2016

Church Assets



Liabilities and Designated Funds



Total Assets in Non-Budget Accounts = \$520,788
That includes \$15,388 in pledges already paid for next year

Bequests

Memorial bequests were given to First Unitarian Church this year by:

Katherine McClure

Staff

Rev. Frank Rivas, Minister
Jan Wilson, Director of Religious Education
Catharine Dixon, Church Administrator
Carrie Helmberger, Membership Coordinator
Jenny Hastings, Nursery Manager
Patricia Will, Organist
Stan Harper, Pianist
Robert McMeen, Choir Director
Kevin Hart, Choir Accompanist
Judi Torneten, Summer Musician
Robert Medrano, Custodian

minister@firstuomaha.org
dre@firstuomaha.org
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childcare@firstuomaha.org

Cover photograph by Diane Withem

