



River Road Unitarian
Universalist Congregation

2016-2017 Annual Report

Senior Minister's Opening Report

Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd

Introduction

I'm presenting my report somewhat differently this year. Rather than a longer narrative framework of the year, I'm offering both images and impressions of the primary tasks and vision-based ministries that have occupied a central place in my work. It's been quite a journey, so I hope you'll enjoy this recap alongside me.

Construction and Building



This year brought the culmination of phase I of our Capital Campaign Expenditures. I'm pleased to report that we managed to come in under-budget for all of the major renovations you now see all around you, in no small part because of the labor and love of our Building Committee and Staff.

Jeff Hollingsworth and Peter Benjamin handled so many details with grace, while Ana Lim, Administrator, served as our primary contact with our project managers at Artisan Partners. After all of that work, budgeting, and the juggling of timelines, we now have new windows throughout the original building, a fully new HVAC system along with asbestos remediation, exterior woodwork, refinished sanctuary floors and a newly installed sprinkler system in the sanctuary. It's hard to overstate how hard we've all worked on this, and I'm so gratified to see the results and to look ahead to the next phase including an all-new website, updated landscaping/lighting, and down the road a bit, a re-designed kitchen.

Worship Life

Starting in the fall, we committed ourselves to a more collaborative and multi-sensory worship style, including arts, images, and recurring themes that tie the worship together in imaginative ways. This included the creation of a lay Worship Arts Team that helped tell some of the core stories during the year.

We should all line up to praise the great Dave Leonard, who has stepped up the whole AV operation with the installation of a new sound board, lights and a fully-mounted projector capable of casting images directly on the wall behind us on Sunday morning. Really, every congregation would be profoundly blessed to "have a Dave," but we're the only ones lucky enough to have his skill and grace on the sound board.



Rev. Nancy's Report (continued)

We've taken ongoing inspiration from the liturgical design work of [Marcia McFee](#), who both Gabrielle and Clif took workshops with and brought back that vision and enthusiasm to River Road. We'll continue to develop the mission of the Worship Arts Team in the coming year and to refine our understanding of multisensory worship as "liturgical artists."

Staff Management and Support

As Senior Minister, a significant portion of my job includes the management and support of our outstanding staff team here. As head of staff, I help to equip our leaders with what it takes for them to freely lead in their program areas.



This picture is titled, "Scary People," and comes from our second (maybe annual) staff trip to the children's haunted house just up the road at American Plant. It was very scary.

We welcomed ministerial intern Alexa Fraser onto the team this year, and walked flexibly with her through cancer treatment. We welcomed her back with great delight right before the end of the congregational year.

With sorrow and many complex feelings, we said goodbye to Walter Taylor as our head custodian. We also welcomed Building Manager Brandon Butler, this spring.

As of this writing, we're creating a job description for a full-time administrative assistant to keep the managerial side of things flowing more smoothly. We've been under-staffed for some time on the admin side, so we welcome the chance to bolster our capacity in the office.

Beth Irikura also stepped in to some additional responsibilities in overseeing the development of our new web site, along with Ana. She's also been personally responsible for our much-improved social media footprint in the last six months.

Staff evaluations will occur this spring, with fresh goals and ideas about how we can keep being creative and supported as we move forward. I love working with this team.



Social Justice

Well, the world asked us to dive in to all of its complexities and fast-moving demands this year. While no single congregation can bear witness to, or creatively address, every issue of justice in our country, I'm very proud of our lay leaders.

You'll see more details in the report of the Social Justice Ministry Team, but I'll just remind us of a few highlights:

- Hosting a busload of guests for the Women's March on Washington, with the heroic efforts of Gail Henry
- Welcoming the Wafa family from Afghanistan into safety in the United States through our partnership with Lutheran Social Services and the marvelous service of Charlotte Jones-Carroll
- The ongoing commitment of our Racial Justice Task Force through the Black Lives Matter Vigils, regional anti-racism trainings and the Racial Justice discernment process
- My own partnership with Macedonia Baptist Church through complex and ongoing deliberations about the cemetery adjacent to their church
- The formal kick-off of Dream Academy after school programs through our partnership with AIM



Finance and Financial Stewardship

The Board was inspired at General Assembly last year to shake off some of our collective fear of talking about money, especially the ways in which that money helps us to meet our vision and strengthen our ministries.

Guided by their passion and focused on their own vision, the financial stewardship committee set out to research, reflect and act on best practices in regard to congregational stewardship.

What emerged was a commitment to budget according to our needs and to offer as much transparency in the financial stewardship process as possible. I'm proud of their efforts and grateful that the Board came along to offer a bold approach.



Rev. Nancy's Report (continued)

This year, Diana Chimes, Bookkeeper and I assembled a Budget Team consisting of members of both the Finance Committee and Financial Stewardship to help guide the budgeting process. The Board pushed for boldness and fair pay for the staff team, and we've emerged with a budget that meets our needs well.

Book Project and Upcoming Sabbatical

Amazingly to me, this is the conclusion of my fifth year here at River Road. That means I'm approaching time for my first sabbatical, which is planned for the end of the next Congregational year in 2018.

However, the Board has agreed to grant me a one month sabbatical in September of 2017, followed by some yet-undetermined time in the summer of 2018.

I've managed to secure a publication contract for a book project I've been pondering for a very long time. The project is temporarily titled: "Singing in a Minor Key: Honest Hope in Complex Times."

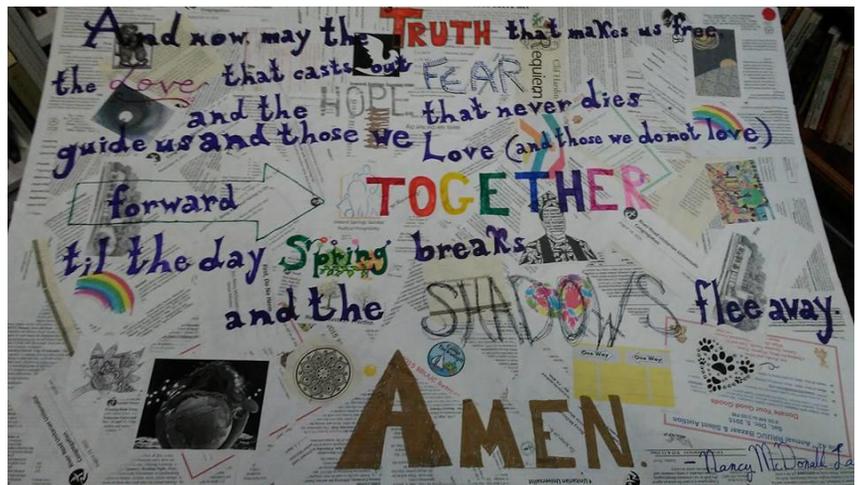
It will look at the legacy of progressive optimism in liberal religion and challenge us to relate meaningfully to the tragic dimension of history.

So it's about liberal religion, idealism, utopianism and tragedy. It's about relating honestly with the world as it is without letting ourselves live only in dreams of the world as it should be. I guess if I get it right, it's about being honest with ourselves about history and the tragedy all around us – and loving this world anyway. We shall see what unfolds, but I'll be off writing in September, hoping for the best and grateful for the opportunity.

With gratitude for this ministry –
this year and every year –



Nancy



Letter from Petrina Hollingsworth Chairperson, Board of Trustees

My Dear Fellow River Roaders,

When I joined the Board four years ago, some people offered sympathy at the sacrifices that would be asked of our family. Sure, I schlepped my kids to meetings so often that one son called them “bored meetings” and the other son fell asleep in the corner of Room 32 once, but by doing so I hope I taught them that this is what you do when you care deeply about your community.

Here are some tips I’ve gleaned from my four years on the Board:

Jump in. If someone asks you to join a committee or tackle a project, go for it. Contributing to this community has been for me a spiritual practice, doing good that enriches me and gives me strength.

Spread the good news. We UUs are hesitant to seem at all evangelical or recruit-y. Why should other religious groups have a monopoly on spreading their visions? Our messages of inclusion, social justice and hope are desperately needed at this time. We should get out there and spread the word.

Talk about money. Under the able leadership of Sam and Renee Worthington and Lyn Lansdale, the Stewardship Committee nudged people this year to be more comfortable talking about financial matters. It amazes me how we, as a congregation, can celebrate our volunteers for their generous gifts of time, but get really squeamish acknowledging generous gifts of money. We should celebrate all contributions.

Laugh, sing and dance like everybody’s watching. Sometimes in a Sunday service, the music is so compelling and rhythmic, but it’s as if we’re all self-conscious and don’t start dancing or clapping along to the beat because we’re waiting for someone to be the first, to be *the* leader. Now is the time to step forward and be the leader who brings everyone into the fun.

I have so many people to thank for this incredible year.

- ▶ Thank you, Rev. Nancy. You are a rock star. At General Assembly last year, sitting in the audience listening to you preach was as if we had front-row seats at an Adele concert and afterward Adele went home with us and gave us private concerts every week. You work with such care, compassion, intelligence and aplomb. I have felt such joy working with you.
- ▶ Thank you, fabulous staff at RRUUC. You are the best professional staff I have ever worked with, and we are so blessed by your skills, hard work, talent and dedication.
- ▶ Thank you, my fellow Board members. It has been a privilege to work with such thoughtful people who have made all their decisions with integrity, care and diligence.
- ▶ Thank you, Jeff, Nate and Matthew. Without your love and support, I simply could not do this.
- ▶ Thank you, former Board chairs, founders and leaders. All the work you have done to build this congregation has guided and inspired me throughout this year.
- ▶ Thank you, Jana Kirkman, for driving my kids home after choir so I could attend meetings, and Lisa Orange, for being you.
- ▶ Thank you to this beloved community and all the amazingly talented people within it for sharing their gifts. When my father passed away in 2013, this congregation wrapped me in warmth and comfort. When my children were born, the community celebrated in our joy as well. Ours is such a caring community, in sickness, in health, in sorrow and in joy. I have made so many dear friends here. I’ll let you in on a little secret; sometimes I come to church just for the hugs.

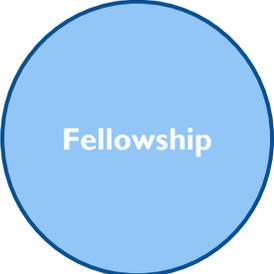
It has been an honor to serve as your Board Chair.

Yours in Fellowship, Spirit, and Service,





2016-2017 Annual Report



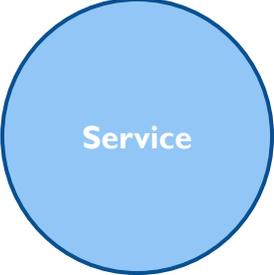
Fellowship

- ▶ **Fellowship** draws us into deeper relationship to our congregational community, so that we might choose connection over isolation.



Spirit

- ▶ **Spiritual growth** draws us into deeper relationship with the sacred, however we might experience it or name it, so that we might be connected to the sources of our strength.



Service

- ▶ **Service** draws us into deeper relationship to the world as it is and the world as it could be, so that we might be agents of change and hope.



Governance and Administration

- ▶ **Governance and Administration** provides the resources and leadership to help us manage our organization and do our ministry.



Fellowship

Activity Groups

Thirteen activity groups met this year and serve as opportunities to meet others, have fun and connect. These groups are drop in, can be of varying sizes, and heartily welcome newcomers. Find more information online, watch the eWeekly or contact [Sheri Blanchette](#).



Creationists

- ▶ Artists and crafters work on their projects while sharing conversation and fellowship.



Daytimers

- ▶ Meet for conversation, coffee/tea & cookies and a new program as scheduled.



Book Groups - Evening and Morning Groups

- ▶ Informal discussion of recent fiction, non-fiction and an occasional older classic.



Garden and Composting

- ▶ Planters, harvesters and composters keep our outdoor laboratory vital. All year long RRUUC's mission of education and service related to nature and the environment connects here. This year our harvest was sent to the shelter as well as used in the preparation of food for pastoral care.



International Dinners

- ▶ Fellowship is supported though sharing a meal at moderately priced international restaurants.



Language - German Conversation

- ▶ Brush up on your German speaking skills, discuss topics of interest, or view a thought provoking German film.



Language - Spanish Conversation

- ▶ Participants share short talks about any topic in Spanish with gentle guidance from the leader on the basics as well as more intensive grammar exercises or reading/music.



Lunch & Learn

- ▶ This new group offers fellowship and fun in a supportive community meeting over lunch and other activities such as museum visits, movies potlucks, and lunches.



Social Bridge

- ▶ There is always room at the table to join in on an afternoon of friendly, social bridge.



WOW (Widows or Widowers Group)

- ▶ Support and fellowship at RRUUC or at a restaurant for brunch after the second services.

Annual Bazaar

- ▶ River Road's 43rd Annual Bazaar and Silent Auction took place on Saturday, December 3, 2016. Over 450 members of the congregation, staff, and friends helped prepare for and staff the Bazaar. We grossed \$60,000 and netted \$45,600.



The crowd builds as customers wait for the doors to open.



Trisha Tice and Sally Watts working at the Intake Table.

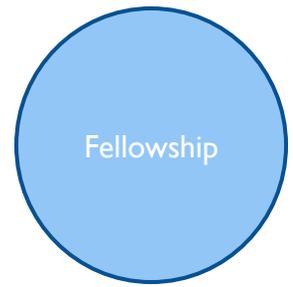
Mary Beth Bowen in Books working (or shopping?!)



Aidan Jones and fearless leader, Diana Gilpatrick, taking a moment to chill in the Café.

2016 Annual Retreat

170 people reconnected, relaxed, and recharged together on Saturday, with 140 RRUUCers attending the entire weekend. There were over 20 different activities, inside and outside, for all ages and interests. What could be finer than to spend the weekend on the shore of the Chesapeake Bay? Come join us for the 2017 Retreat on September 8-10, 2017.



2017 Annual Bazaar Saturday, November 4

The 2017 Bazaar breaks tradition with a new date, tweaked structure, and streamlined processes. It's a new energy!

The dedication, commitment, and goals remain the same: to build connections among our congregants through teamwork and to raise money to support RRUUC's vision, ministries, and work.



So, be part of the Bazaar - donate your Good Goods, volunteer to help, buy Good Goods, and have some fun!

Small Groups

- ▶ Hosted 24 Small Groups (214 congregants), added three new groups, one of which transformed to a social ministry group, Animal Ministry Task Force.
- ▶ Offered two sessions of “Sample a Small Group” facilitated by Sheri Blanchette, Director of Membership & Outreach, to invite newcomers into Small Groups or to start a new one.

Spring Services Auction

- ▶ Offered 86 donations from congregants for other congregants to bid on in the annual silent auction raising over \$15,750.

Newcomers Brunch

- ▶ Welcomed over 70 newcomers and their families at three Newcomers Brunches hosted by the Membership/Connections Committee and the ministers.

Membership

- ▶ Welcomed 32 new Members at Joining Ceremonies held between May 1, 2017 to May 30, 2017, bringing our total number of Members to 553.
- ▶ Preparing to welcome another 13 congregants who plan to join the first month of the new congregational year.
- ▶ Hosted a Membership Recognition Ceremony at each service and a New Member and 5-Year Anniversary Dinner .on May 7, 2017.
- ▶ Shared congregational life with 194 Friends. An additional 254 people participated in some aspect of the congregation’s activities and programs.

Welcome Team

- ▶ Welcomed 174 visitors who signed the Guest Book. Since then 10 have become Members, eight are Intend to Join, and 34 have become Friends.

Reflection

Alicia and David
and their children, Luther, Abdisa, and Memphis
New Members, January 2017

Ever since we moved back to DC in the summer of 2012, my husband and I had discussed joining the Unitarian Church. He had been raised UU at All Souls in DC, so we knew all about the openness and awesomeness of UU folk. But it wasn't until the election in November 2016 that we took immediate action to find a UU church and join it. The shock of feeling as though we did not know or understand the community, and the country we lived in, spurred us to action. We find each week rejuvenating for ourselves, and critical for our children, who we want to be raised in an open and accepting community. We are elated (and relieved) to find kindred souls and be able to know that despite the seemingly constant crises happening around us, there is a place that can accept and challenge us to be our better selves.



Congregational Care

This was a year of exploration, creation and implementation for the Congregational Care Vision Team with Rev Louise Green, Sarah Burnett, Cheryl Dodwell, Cara Iadarola, Jeanne Kent, and Tonja Nansel. The Team:

Developed a new vision and mission for Congregational Care at RRUUC.

- ▶ *Vision:* A ministry of equals forging deep connections, creating community, and growing together spiritually.
- ▶ *Mission:* To create and deepen spiritual connections among RRUUC congregants by facilitating compassionate and responsive support during significant life events.

Launched the Ministries of Presence and Action

- ▶ *The Ministry of Presence* is a lay-led group of volunteers who offer caring presence and non-judgmental, confidential listening to congregants in need of support.
- ▶ *The Ministry of Action* is a lay-led group of volunteers who provide logistical support to congregants in the form of meal deliveries, rides, assistance at memorial services, and cards.

Developed and launched a system of support for volunteers including training and regular check-ins, with a focus on spiritual nourishment and building connection.

Reflection Mindful Knitters



The act of creating a shawl, chemo hat, baby hat, or lap robe, transfers love and caring from our hands to the deserving recipient. The group blesses the items when we finish them, and then we read our Mindful Knitters' blessing when we give them to a deserving person.

This year we gave creations to our congregants and to patients at the Washington Hospital Center Palliative Care Center. Recipients know that someone cared enough to make something for them, sometimes that is about all that they have.

~ Pat Kay & Martine Brezius

Kitchen Ministry

Prepared over 125 meals for congregational care and RRUUC events while creating and building community through cooking, sharing meals, and fellowship.



Spirit

Adult Religious Education Classes

- ▶ Offered 17 classes serving approximately 200 adults.
- ▶ Showed the movie *Screenagers* to the larger community which attracted 100 additional folks.
- ▶ Facilitated three classes of *Spiritual Storytelling* plus *Beloved Conversations*, *a Meditation on Race and Ethnicity* and similar classes offered by the Racial Justice Task Force.

Children's Religious Education (RE)

- ▶ Forty-three (43) teachers supported this children's ministry serving 100 in five (5) classes. Three (3) paid childcare providers cared for the explosion of 22 infants and toddlers in the nursery for a total RE enrollment with Youth Group & Middle School of 192 children and youth served by a total of 64 teachers. A steady group of 20+ attended Summer Religious Education as well.
- ▶ The Religious Education Committee instituted a parent orientation – the Souper Supper.
- ▶ A model of Sunday multigenerational religious education, *Neighboring Faiths* was tried but not with resounding success. It was a new and vastly different model and needed more support than Lifespan Religious Educator was able to provide. Reflecting on costs and promises may offer another opportunity.
- ▶ The RE Classroom technology project began and will provide monitors in most classrooms in 2017-2018. Also initiated was a project to transform the Safe Congregations Policy and Practices.



Reflection

Gabrielle Farrell

Lifespan Religious Educator, ML CRE

The year was largely lived out among four events: the accidental death of my father, the marriage of my daughter, the election, and building construction. The Christmas Pageant was a saving grace for me. Sitting on the chancel with the cast, amidst all that new life, while my father, so close at Suburban was letting go of his, gave me a strength and peace that got me through. I struggled a lot that day at the hospital and was so close to not coming. Talking with Louise helped me figure out where I should be.

There were hundreds of children at the Pageant that night. We ran out of candles. We sang Silent Night in the wrong part.

The Magi were my favorites this year. There were eight of them. They traveled in a pack almost bumping into each other on every journey, including the gift-giving and while looking through those mailing tube telescopes.

All my family, save my father, sat in the congregation that night. My daughter, a Mary herself 18 years prior, cried the whole way through. It ushered in what little spirit of Christmas we could have and so, it was perfect as it always is.

Spirit

Religious Education & Programs for Youth

Our middle school OWL program had 11 students this year.

Youth and chaperones. Stayed at RRUUC and went to Adventure Park for ropes course at the August Youth Retreat.



19 High school and adults served in rural West Virginia for our third trip.



Youth group raised \$1200 for Planned Parenthood.

Spirit

Religious Education & Programs for Youth (continued)



Nine seniors Bridged at the annual Youth Worship Service



14 Coming of Age youth from last year read their credo statements in October 2016.



Six 9th graders and six adult mentors participated in the Coming of Age program.

As one of many projects, the middle school class made lunches for Shelter Week. They were able to link this and other activities to their curriculum, *Heeding the Call: Qualities of a Justice Maker*.

Youth Choirs

- ▶ Three strong groups, spanning kindergarten through high school are: The Chalice Lighters Choir, The River Road Youth Choir, and the River Road Teen Choir. Thirty-three children and youth participated in the youth choirs.
- ▶ From September through April, the youth choirs have performed for 21 Sunday services.

The River Road Choir

- ▶ Performed the Vivaldi *Magnificat* for the Winter Music Service.
- ▶ Participated in the area wide music and worship service in May, *America, the Dream: Singing for Racial Justice*.
- ▶ Performed our Spring Music Service, *Traditions: Music from African and American Cultures*.
- ▶ Sixty-one people participated in singing with the River Road Choir.

Other Music Programs

- ▶ Provided music at our Annual Retreat with singers and instrumentalists of our congregation.
- ▶ Held the community music making of the Winter Cabaret in a warm and festive setting.
- ▶ Facilitated and performed at music outreach to those in assisted living.





Inquirers

- ▶ Implemented this eight part series covering the basics of Unitarian Universalism and RRUUC including Faith, Development, Social Action & Community Service, Membership, Tour & Orientation, Congregational Care, Worship & Liturgical Year, Meet the Minister, and UU History, Principles & Sources.
- ▶ Facilitated 12 sessions welcoming over 62 participants. Gabrielle Farrell, Religious Educator and Sheri Blanchette, Director Membership, along with congregational leaders having expertise in the topic area being covered hosted the sessions.

Fine Arts

- ▶ Six area artists as well as a number of the congregation's artists in an RRUUC show, shared their work in exhibits in the Fellowship Hall providing aesthetic enrichment of our congregants and guests.

Bookstore

- ▶ Developed and managed a new team of weekly booksellers and established operational procedures. The Bookstore had an ambitious set of titles and managed to break even, though we carry our pledge to congregational income into the next year.

Contemporary Issues Forum: (CC&C) Coffee Controversy & Conversation

- ▶ Scheduled 30 programs with a focus on social justice issues, particularly those germane to Maryland, and other themes including foreign relations, US security issues, art, history, and nature. Encouraged more congregants to speak about their own career skills and charitable activities.
- ▶ Upgraded our state-of-the-art audio-visual system in the Fireside Room.



Social Justice Ministry

ACTION in Montgomery (AIM)

- ▶ As an affiliate member of AIM since 2014, RRUUC supported the following strategic efforts of AIM in Montgomery County in 2016-17:
- ▶ Affordable housing – the County funded the Housing Initiative at a record \$59 million
- ▶ Affordable after school program – “Child First” started at two elementary schools and county council voted to expand Dream Academy to four schools total for five days/week (up from four).
- ▶ Transit justice – AIM works with Amalgamated Transit Union for better treatment of both public transportation riders and workers, including a May 7 protest action.
- ▶ Community listening – to determine future agendas, AIM organized listening sessions in schools, churches, mosques and soon will do so in buses.

Animal Ministry

- ▶ Began building relationships with local animal rescue organizations, spotlighting them at our table in the fellowship hall after services and selling homemade peanut butter dog biscuits to raise funds for them. Promoted one of these rescue organizations (Poplar Spring Animal Sanctuary) for Share the Plate Sunday, resulting in a \$1,900 donation from the congregation.



- ▶ Hosted a visiting UU minister (a national leader in Animal Ministry) for a full weekend of programming, including a service project at Poplar Spring and presentations at three UU congregations in the D.C. area.

Environmental Task Force

- ▶ Received a \$5,000 grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) for the congregation to install rain barrels and teach the congregation about storm water runoff and pollution.
- ▶ Installed barrels at 30 homes of RRUUC members, as well as one in RRUUC's vegetable garden. CBT also sent a speaker to talk about Bay restoration.
- ▶ Organized a residential light bulb exchange, inviting Montgomery County Environmental Protection Department to send a program manager, with PEPCO sponsorship, who exchanged three LED lights for old incandescent bulbs at no cost, and highlighted energy savings.

Service

Social Justice Ministry Team

Established in 2015, the Team's purpose is to work closely with the Senior Minister to create and sustain a social justice program that reflects RRUUC vision and values.

- ❖ Brought social action teams together twice to share news of activities and of change from social justice pledging to social justice giving starting in 2017-18.
- ❖ Sponsored a Social Justice Fair to provide a platform for all action teams, partners and affiliates to convey news to the congregation about their activities and encourage newer members to join these programs.
- ❖ Maintained and enhanced Social Justice bulletin board, instituted a monthly calendar of activities and regularly updated brochure on social justice to communicate news, contacts and involvement opportunities to congregants.
- ❖ Assisted initiation of two new social justice activities – Animal Ministry and Home Stay – and experimented with “extending the offering” plate collections for four benefiting organizations.

Social Justice Ministry

Immigration and Refugee Issues and Advocacy Group

- ▶ Supporting a refugee family from Afghanistan, which arrived in February, in partnership with Lutheran Social Services, by furnishing and stocking their apartment, providing transport and cultural orientation, as well as ESL tutoring.
- ▶ Selling Good Neighbor yard signs to congregants, Beth Chai and UUC of Rockville.
- ▶ Attending training to learn to witness ICE actions or accompany immigrants to ICE visits.

Latin America Task Network

- ▶ Shared Latin American culture by: sharing at Religious Education classes; preparing a Day of the Dead display to honor deceased congregants and family; holding a Fiesta fundraiser including RE children building piñatas, and adults making ethnic desserts. Invited Salvadoran community to the Fiesta.
- ▶ Sold Fair Trade product throughout the year to help farmers and co-ops in Latin America, Africa, and Palestine.
- ▶ Reviewed RRUUC history of youth-adult trips to Santa Marta, El Salvador at a contemporary issues forum (CC&C).
- ▶ Collaborated with Santa Marta Hometown Association and COTSA to help raise funds for projects in El Salvador, supporting scholarships via CoCoDA for Santa Marta youth to attend college in El Salvador; providing a scholarship to DC's Carlos Rosario School; showing films for the Immigration Film Festival; and maintaining contacts with Human Rights First and a Detention Center Visitation.

Middle East Task Force

- ▶ Collected 80 signatures on petition to Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) to divest from companies complicit in violation of Palestinian human rights in the West Bank. This campaign achieved 55% in favor of the resolution at UUA General Assembly.
- ▶ Arranged a share-the-plate collection for ANERA (American Near East Refugee Aid) and a speaker for RRUUC's contemporary issues forum on ANERA programs to benefit refugees, especially Syrian refugees.

Partner Church

- ▶ Organized and funded a 10-day visit from Fiatfalva (Transylvania) partner church's minister and four lay members, including many opportunities to interact with RRUUC supporters.
- ▶ Funded an after-school program in Fiatfalva for Roma children, who suffer from discrimination and limited opportunities. Funded teacher salaries at the Unitarian school of our other partner in Kyrdem, in NE India. The school educates over 200 children across 10 grades.



Service

Partners

Our Social Justice Ministry partners with other organizations in pursuit of effective ways to promote positive change. A number of these connections are made through the work of the action teams.

La Clínica del Pueblo

Opened two new sites – one in Hyattsville to serve the immigrant community that has largely migrated to that area from Columbia Heights, and another in Mount Pleasant, which will house staff not directly involved with health services at the main sites and serve as a welcome and safe place housing outreach programs, such as patient forums and prevention programs. RRUUC provided financial support through social justice pledges and gifts for children at their holiday party for low-income families.

Beacon House

Celebrated its 25th year of providing tutoring, mentoring, sports and nutrition programs to at-risk youth 5-18 years old in the Edgewood area of northeast DC. RRUUC provided financial support through social justice pledges, donated holiday gifts, and housed 12 Central Michigan University students who volunteered at Beacon House.

Shepherd's Table

Continued to mobilize a team of volunteers once a month to help serve the free evening meal to homeless persons at Shepherd's Table. RRUUC continued to provide financial support for this program through social justice pledges.

Social Justice Ministry

Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF)

- ▶ Added two scholars (one each from College Bound and Mentors, Inc) to receive \$1,500 to \$2,000/year for four years, bringing total College Access program beneficiaries to 15.
- ▶ Conducted a Congregational Survey about “What does racial justice mean to you?” to explore beliefs of RRUUC congregants, which has gathered over 250 comments. Analysis of this data will be shared with RJTF and Beloved Conversations alumni, who will organize focus groups to explore engagement levels and future opportunities for work on racial justice.
- ▶ Held weekly Friday night Black Lives Matter vigils, involving youth and visiting community members, as public witness to this important issue.



UULM-Maryland

- ▶ UU Legislative Ministry-MD provided RRUUC with critical information on state legislative issues and key legislators involved, so we could advocate directly with Maryland lawmakers. Issues included environment (fracking ban), paid sick leave, death with dignity, and criminal justice reform (bail money reform). UULM-MD also lobbied on these topics directly and invited Maryland communities to join.

Unitarian-Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)

- ▶ Presented the Ken Burns-Artemis Joukowski film *Defying the Nazis*, telling the story of the Sharps, USC founders’ work to rescue vulnerable Europeans in 1939-40, as part of UUSC Sunday.
- ▶ Informed congregation about UUSC programs as foundation for a share-the-plate collection to benefit UUSC (\$4250 collected), to raise awareness of UUSC work with Burma and Haiti.

UUs for Social Justice (UUSJ)

- ▶ Advocated at the national level for immigration, environment and income inequality issues with Congress.
- ▶ Regained active membership in UUSJ by naming a representative to the organization, and participating in its subcommittees, particularly the immigration effort where we joined the May 1 rally and march to the White House. RRUUC provided its fair share membership dues to UUSJ through social justice pledged funds.

Youth Group Social Justice Actions

- ▶ Developed a relationship with Bethesda Cares, and supported it through fundraising via Cardboard City (homeless overnight), Thanksgiving food drive, and Murder Mystery Dinner.

Building

The Building Committee oversaw the completion of various renovations in the old wing, nearly completing phase I of the project including:

- ▶ installing new windows throughout the original wing,
- ▶ installing the new HVAC, motorized blinds in the sanctuary, and refinishing the sanctuary floor, completing work on the fire sprinkler system.
- ▶ replacing rotten wood and painting exterior areas.

Phase II will include work on the path from the parking lot to the front doors and renovations to the kitchen.

The committee is identifying projects that will need to be completed but are not part of the current project. The Fellowship Building is nearing ten years old and needs painting and carpeting.



Computer Team



The team focused on the operation of the website and upgrades to the equipment in the office:

- ▶ added a new networking panel in the chancel closet to serve the growing demand for technology in the sanctuary.
- ▶ replaced the computers that run the digital signage with Chromebits.

In the coming year, the Computer team will:

- ▶ add LCD monitors and Chromebits to the classrooms.
- ▶ help transition a new web site team to take over management of the web site and
- ▶ look into merging the computer team with the sound system committee to provide an overall technology committee for RRUUC.

Endowment Committee

Reconstituted and fully staffed the committee with three new members and a new chairperson. Major accomplishments include:

- ▶ Drafted a new Endowment Committee Charter, which was reviewed and approved by the Board in November 2016.
- ▶ Created an investment plan and began implementing the plan.
- ▶ Re-custodied the endowment fund's assets in a no-fee account at Charles Schwab.

Finance Committee.

- ▶ Developed guidelines for accounting practices, financial statements and budget (see [online](#)).
- ▶ Proposed bylaw amendment to reassign the Investment Committee role to the Finance Committee to streamline and improve RRUUC's financial management by having a single committee take responsibility for financial planning and investment decisions.
- ▶ In conjunction with the Endowment Committee, proposed bylaw amendments that:
 - provides that Endowment Funds must be invested and assessed in accordance with the Maryland Uniform Prudent Management Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA)
 - clarifies the use of endowment income, in accordance with the standards set forth in UPMIFA
 - provides a formula for measuring endowment income consistent with UPMIFA
- ▶ Designed new comprehensive, compact financial report for the Board.



Grounds

- ▶ Graded the fire escape route along the north side of the building to provide an easier walkway for the day care children.
- ▶ Upgraded the fireside patio by adding a timber retaining wall and planting of a Chinese Elm for shade.
- ▶ The Two Eagle Scout projects have made the "meditation circle" in the easement more usable and accessible. The effort continues in the easement area against invasive plants.



Financial Stewardship Committee (FSC)

The FSC developed several goals for the 2017-18 stewardship campaign:

- ▶ **Increased transparency** to the congregation of staff salaries and compensation, particularly the lack of a competitive salary for the Senior Minister position.
- ▶ **Kicked off the campaign with Story SPARC** in early March; over 300 people attended.
- ▶ Emphasized the campaign **theme of Courage and Commitment** and a challenge to live our values and commit to action.
- ▶ **Increased transparency and recognition/celebration of the 3 categories of financial support** offered by members and friends of RRUUC: Visionary, Sustainer, and Supporter.
- ▶ **Tailored** request for increased pledging based on level of giving (+5% Visionary, +10% Sustainer, +30% Supporter).
- ▶ **Created a graphic display of contributors** to the stewardship campaign by level of giving.
- ▶ **Increased the base of financial support** from the Supporter and Sustainer levels of giving to reduce dependence on large Visionary contributions from a small number of members.
- ▶ **Identified the 2017 Goal of \$960,000** vs. last year's results of \$864,625 with 360 pledges as of 5/24/16.
- ▶ **Raised \$954,401 with 363 pledges as of May 30, 2017.**



The premise behind these goals is that increased transparency and visibility in fund-raising increases generosity. The FSC wanted to increase the pledging platform from last year's campaign by ~\$100,000. Leading by example, the FSC and the RRUUC Board of Trustees increased their pledges over last year by 24%. Sam and Renèe Worthington did an outstanding job as campaign co-chairs, framing the message and acting as the "faces" of the campaign.

Persistent outreach to every current and new member and prior pledger in our community has this year's campaign within 99.5% of its ambitious goal as of May 30th. The FSC believes this is the most generous stewardship campaign from RRUUC in the history of the congregation.

Treasurer's Report: Income-Expenses 2016-2017

River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation Operating Revenues & Expenses Summary Year-to-date, Through March 2017					
	Annual Budget (This Year)	YTD Actual (This Year)	% of Annual Budget Used (This Year)	YTD Actual (Last Year)	% of Annual Budget Used (Last Year)
INCOME					
Prepaid Pledges (FY17 paid in FY16)		\$ 176,491	21.2%	\$ 173,767	19.5%
Pledges (FY17 paid in FY17)	\$ 834,100	\$ 550,838	66.0%	\$ 516,506	57.8%
Past Year Pledges (FY16 paid in FY17)	20,000	20,578	102.9%	27,958	139.8%
Subtotal - all pledge payments		747,908		718,231	
Sunday Collections	26,000	20,248	77.9%	19,006	73.1%
Gifts & Miscellaneous	25,000	30,344	121.4%	10,691	42.8%
Pledges, Gifts, Collection	\$ 905,100	\$ 798,499	88.2%	\$ 747,928	77.6%
Building Rental Use & Fees	126,000	75,899	60.2%	82,057	65.1%
Day Care Rental	38,640	28,980	75.0%	28,396	80.0%
Rental Income	\$ 164,640	\$ 104,879	63.7%	\$ 110,453	70.1%
Bazaar Income	63,500	60,616	95.5%	71,156	112.1%
Services Auction	15,000	2,035	13.6%	2,619	17.5%
Fundraising Income	\$ 78,500	\$ 62,651	79.8%	\$ 73,775	94.0%
Church Activities incl Bookstore	3,000	4,638	154.6%	3,465	346.5%
Retreat Registrations	12,000	14,460	120.5%		
Adult Religious Education	9,500	9,085	95.6%	14,423	169.7%
ARE & Activities	\$ 24,500	\$ 28,183	115.0%	\$ 17,888	188.3%
Interest Income	6,100	2,668	43.7%	4,752	77.9%
Estate Gifts		4,599		4,000	
Total Revenues	\$ 1,178,840	\$ 1,001,479	85.0%	\$ 958,797	78.6%
EXPENSES					
PROGRAM STAFF					
Minister's & Membership	284,250	220,825	77.7%	221,752	76.7%
Religious Education	146,568	111,824	76.3%	109,216	76.6%
Music	109,654	82,697	75.4%	77,445	6.1%
Total Program Staff	\$ 540,472	\$ 415,346	76.8%	\$ 408,413	76.3%
Administrative	157,839	133,674	84.7%	155,784	80.6%
Building	88,410	67,442	76.3%	67,493	79.4%
Total Administrative Staff	\$ 246,249	\$ 201,116	81.7%	\$ 223,277	80.2%
Total STAFF	\$ 786,721	\$ 616,462	78.4%	\$ 631,690	77.6%
NON-STAFF Expenses					
Worship, Education, Community	45,600	37,283	81.8%	34,393	63.6%
Bazaar	10,000	14,993	149.9%	10,643	19.7%
Retreat	12,000	17,848	148.7%	1,416	2.6%
Denominational	49,623	36,762	74.1%	39,204	74.1%
Admin & Communications	61,445	31,616	51.5%	33,826	56.4%
Building & Grounds	127,800	87,175	68.2%	90,327	69.9%
Mortgage Interest Expense	35,800	27,312	76.3%	29,392	77.5%
Other Ordinary & Depreciation Exp	8,004	5,479	68.5%	24,375	47.6%
Total Non-Staff Expenses	\$ 350,272	\$ 258,468	73.8%	\$ 263,575	63.5%
Total Expenses	\$ 1,136,993	\$ 874,930	77.0%	\$ 895,265	76.1%
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ 41,847	\$ 126,549	302.4%	\$ 63,532	486.8%
Cash Adjustments					
Depreciation	\$ 7,600	\$ 5,479		\$ 5,760	
Mortgage Principal payments	\$ (47,912)	\$ (35,481)		\$ (33,401)	
Non-Cash Expense					
Building 2008+ Depreciation		\$ (103,486)		\$ (107,997)	

Treasurer's Report: Account Balance

RRUUC Bank Account Listing 3/31/17		
Fund		TOTAL
Operating	\$	260,017
Capital reserve	\$	102,000
General reserve	\$	225,000
Construction (Cap Campaign)*	\$	617,118
Johnson Fund	\$	125,656
Endowment	\$	809,501
TOTAL at 6/30/16	\$	2,139,292



Treasurer's Report: Capital Campaign 2017

Building Project 2015 As of March 31, 2017							
	Pledges at 6-30-15	Pledge Changes	Current Pledges	YTD FY15 June 2015	YTD FY16 June 2016	Actuals to 3/31/17	Total
Project Income							
Capital Campaign Pledges	\$ 3,200,661	\$ (20,588)	\$ 3,180,073	\$ 1,444,541	\$ 496,569	\$ 476,605	\$ 2,417,714
Gifts				\$ 130	\$ 5,280	\$ 320	\$ 5,730
Interest Income				\$ 185	\$ 1,364	\$ 199	\$ 1,748
Line of Credit draw							\$ 237,500
Total Income	\$ 3,200,661	\$ (20,588)	\$ 3,180,073	\$ 1,444,856	\$ 503,213	\$ 477,123	\$ 2,662,692
Project Costs							
Phase One - Group A							
Loan Interest & Fees					2,625		\$ 6,271
Construction Manager	\$ 200,000	\$ 189,600		\$ 11,000	\$ 157,232		\$ 213,757
Windows	\$ 1,000,000			\$ 4,250	\$ 321,106		\$ 672,979
Asbestos	\$ 300,000				\$ 143,809		\$ 186,274
Sprinkler	\$ 250,000				\$ 130,566		\$ 156,033
HVAC - Mechanical	\$ 800,000				\$ 350,184		\$ 610,228
Building Envelope/Attic Storage					\$ 81,058		\$ 101,094
Fellowship Building Upgrades					\$ 12,940		\$ 32,739
Updates & Finishing							\$ 47,849
Permits & General Project Costs					\$ 10,080		\$ 10,480
Contingency	\$ 300,000						
Design Fees							
Hard Costs							
Contingency							
Phase One - Group B							
Property Safety Improvements							
Path Lighting							\$ 124
Security							\$ 5,513
Communications							
Website							\$ 50
Staff website development							\$ 2,183
Total Expenses	\$ 2,850,000	\$ 2,263,426	\$ -	\$ 15,250	\$ 1,209,600		\$ 2,045,574
Remaining Funds				\$ 1,429,606	\$ 738,468		\$ 617,118



Sound Committee

Completed major technical upgrades to audiovisual in the Sanctuary in three major areas: audio, lighting, and projection.

- ▶ Replaced aging wires and added a digital stage box in the chancel closet. This audio project was necessary because of the capital renovation work that replaced the windows in the north wall.
- ▶ Installed four moving lights and a new lighting board to enhance stage lighting. Insight Meditation of Greater Washington helped fund this project and they use it every Wednesday for their events
- ▶ Installed a new ceiling mounted high brightness projector with associated interface electronics for connection of laptops, tablets and DVD sources to the projector and existing sound system.

Website Design Committee

This new committee began with the guidance of Gabrielle Farrell, Religious Educator and Sheri Blanchette, Director of Membership, in the beginning of the fiscal year. A team of volunteers, representing a cross section of our congregation, helped with the first phase of the project:

- ▶ Determined the direction, form, and function of the new site and selected the UUA Word Press theme,
- ▶ Researched and selected a local consultant, Kevin Vess of Vess Studios.

The current phase of the project involves the website build, from its architecture and wire frames, to the addition of content and media that will appear on the website. This next phase will have a core staff team, Beth Irikura, Religious Educator for Youth, Sheri Blanchette, and Ana Lim, Administrator. Together, with a handful of volunteers, they will develop content and media, as well as the procedures and practices that will govern the content and update of the new website.

The final phase will be the testing, currently expected to occur in August 2017, when both websites will run parallel. The new website is expected to be online and ready for full use by members and the public by September 2017.

