

# **Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2010–2011**

*Living Our Principles*



***Kitchen Renovation Completed***

**Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing  
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**Church Staff 2010–2011**

Minister	Charles Stephens
Director, Lifespan Religious Education	Robin Pugh
Director, Music Ministry	Caryl Tipton
Office Administrator	Susan Irgang
Accompanist	Wendy Feaver

**Board of Trustees 2010–2011**

President	Dan Tuft
President Elect	Jerry Scheick
Vice President	Holly Bussey
Treasurer	Ludy D'Angelo
Secretary	Bernice Husk
Trustee	Peter Bateman
Trustee	Lynn Hanson
Trustee	Bud Johnson
Trustee	Heather Ransome

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## MINISTER'S REPORT

This has been a very rewarding year for me as your minister. I look back and there have been so many things to be grateful for. We have a congregation that has grown in all four of the major growth areas highlighted by those who do research about congregations. We have welcomed many new members this year and though we have not grown significantly in numbers, as of June 2011 we have maintained our numbers at 267 with a wonderful influx of babies and young children. As the average age in most congregations grows older, our congregation is attracting young people along with their energy and creative new ideas.

"Maturational Growth" is where individuals and the congregation as a whole grow in the maturity of our faith. A congregation is healthy when it is able to empower the members to contribute the gifts that they have for the health of the congregation and the larger community. This kind of growth has taken place in Interfaith Dialogues we helped start, the participation of many in the *Living the Welcoming Congregation* sessions that help us understand what it means to be a Welcoming Congregation, to the four groups that have met all year focusing on how we can live our UU Principles even when they seem to be in conflict. Add to these the many Adult Education classes and Small Group Ministries that have met and helped individuals deepen their spirituality and expand their religious imaginations.

A third type of congregational growth, called "Organic Growth," happens when a congregation is able to grow in its ability to work together as a diverse living and growing community. Our Board, Committee on Ministry, and the congregation as a whole have grown in this area. We contracted with the UUA to have a consultant work with us last fall on starting a long-range plan. This five-year strategic planning has begun, and we'll be continuing to work on it throughout the coming year. All our committees and leaders have been working to produce healthier internal organizational systems with written policies, procedures and committee goals and descriptions. This organic growth will help us to be better at incorporating new members, retaining present members and enabling everyone to better participate as active members and leaders within our congregation and in the larger community.

Finally, there is growth in our ability to embody our Unitarian Universalist principles. It is my belief that millions of people in the world are hungry for what our faith perspective can provide and that the stronger and more vital we are as a congregation, the more we will have to offer the larger world. As we have been able to engage in spiritual deepening, we are motivated to live out our faith in the world. Members of our congregation have been making a difference in the world through our continued and growing participation. Numerous ongoing social justice activities include the UU Legislative Ministry of New Jersey, the New Jersey Regional Coalition, Loaves and Fishes, the HomeFront meals and tutoring every Monday evening, and the newly formed Food Ministry. We finally have a fully operable kitchen this year and are cooking and delivering meals to the homeless. Members are embodying our UU message and values and having an impact on the social environment of the larger community. We stretched our budget this year to raise the percentage of the offering plate that goes to social justice and social services to 50% for the coming year.

Indeed as the Unitarian Universalist affirmation reads:

Love is the doctrine of this church  
The quest of truth is its sacrament  
And service is its prayer.  
*(arranged by L. Griswold Williams)*

As I look back at the past year, I am so very grateful to our Board officers and members, the Committee and Task Force chairs and members, each one of our Religious Education teachers, choir members and every one of you who has given so freely of your time, leadership, energy, talent and commitment over the past year. The present economic situation in our country and world makes me more aware than ever of the financial generosity of the members and friends of UUCWC; your contributions help sustain our community of faith, hope, love and action. It is encouraging that after all the concern during budgeting time each year, we once again had a significant budget surplus at the end of 2010–2011.

Part of my personal gratification this year has been working with a wonderful staff. I have enjoyed continuing to work collaboratively with Caryl Tipton, who completed her nineteenth year as our Director of Music Ministry. I have enjoyed working closely with Robin Pugh, our Director of Life Span Religious Education. This year we added two new staff members to create our new and dynamic team: Susan Irgang came on as our new Office Manager and has been doing a wonderful job keeping us and the office well organized; Wendy Feaver joined our worship team as our new pianist/accompanist (and vocalist extraordinaire), which has added creativity, stability and depth to our team. What a joy to know that they are all returning in September.

It has been a delight for me to work this past year with all of the above staff members and the wonderful lay leaders here at UUCWC. You would think that with such a dream team and my deep love for UUCWC that I would have enough sense to stay around for many more years. But, I decided at the end of this year that I would retire from my ministry here at UUCWC during the summer of 2012. It is said that there isn't a right time for a minister to retire; we either do it too early or too late. It seems the right time personally for me to retire from active full time ministry after nearly forty years of ordained parish ministry. And I also feel that at this time, UUCWC is at a very strong and vital stage in its life.

I look forward to the coming year as a time to be ever more present and appreciative of our time together here at UUCWC.

*With Love and Warmth,  
Charles J. Stephens*

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

First things first, so it is fitting that I express my personal gratitude to all of you who were there for my family and me during my time as your President as we dealt with family illness, the death of my beloved sister, and the repeated hospitalization of my mother. Not to mention all the church issues that we faced as a community.

When I started two years ago, there was some pretty intense frustration at a few issues, one being the state of the non-completion of our kitchen. I believe in some basic things, and one is our life together shouldn't be so frustrating. So I thought, "Let's get it done." I sure didn't do it, but lots of people did, and the kitchen is a reality. A well-deserved recognition of everyone's efforts is in the works. From the Board, special thanks to outgoing Board member Heather Ransome and her commitment to this project.

I am proud of the work of the Living Our Principles groups that have worked to turn the painful difficulty we experienced as a community in response to the labyrinth project into something positive and healing. Many thanks to the contributions of the Committee on Ministry as well as the Council for Faith in Action.

For years, many people have commented on our need to have a five year/strategic plan, a plan for our efforts to live our mission in a coherent and cohesive way. The Task Force that will guide our church in that process had its first meeting this past May and is well into its work as this is written.

Special thanks are also due to Ludy D'Angelo, whose commitment to his work as Treasurer and Board member, as well as member of the Finance Committee, was often unseen, but his positive impact on the state of how we organize our finances will continue long beyond his departure from this leadership position. Thanks Ludy!

Thanks to each of you for your support. Thank you to the Board for being patient with me and for your hard work. I leave you in the hands of one of the most dedicated Board members I have ever seen, Jerry Scheick, and some outstanding new Board Members. I am confident that Jerry will lead the Board with that commitment and dedication as it continues to provide positive leadership to our beloved community.

*Dan Tuft, President*

## **ACCESSIBILITY TASK FORCE**

**Mission:** We will achieve accessibility for people of all abilities by removing barriers so that they can fully participate in our religious community.

Our congregation is designated as an Accessible Congregation. We ensure that we are accessible to people of all abilities by working closely with many committees of the Church. We work with the Minister and Worship Associates to make sure that people of various abilities can participate in all aspects of the service. We work with the Membership and Fellowship Committees to ensure a welcoming environment for those with varied disabilities by providing special seating, hearing devices, and large print materials. Our coffee hour and Fellowship activities strive to accommodate the needs of those with special dietary needs or allergies. Our Children's RE program provides teachers and materials in those classrooms where children with special needs may need special attention. Our UUCWC website is explicit about our being a welcoming congregation for people of all abilities.

Members of the committee include Sarah Burke, Lori Rahn, Rollie Rahn, Mike Muccioli, and Michael Knox.

*Jane Shafer, Coordinator*

## **ADULT RELIGIOUS ENRICHMENT (EDUCATION)**

Adult Religious Enrichment (Education) - ARE - is a committee whose primary purpose and mission is to "support the vision of UUCWC by offering programs that encourage individual members - and the community at large — to explore their religious and spiritual odysseys."

Program offerings by ARE, both alone and in cooperation with other committees and/or groups in the church community, allow individual members and friends to increase their knowledge of UU history and theology, to deepen their spiritual development, to be empowered to be leaders of the community, and to put their faith into action. Under the direction of the DLRE, this committee creates programming, initiates partnerships with other UUCWC entities, and assures the quality of the ARE program through training, oversight, and solicitation and reporting of participant and facilitator feedback.

### **Goals/Accomplishments for 2010–2011**

- Maintained committee membership of eight.
- Evaluated and revised portfolio role descriptions according to needs of the committee and preferences of committee members.
- Produced a Fall ARE brochure, a Winter/Spring brochure, and various flyers to publicize program offerings.
- Partnered with Standing on the Side of Love to structure the *Living the Welcoming Congregation* program with 66 members and friends participating to some extent in the LWC program this year.

- Was represented by an ARE committee member at UU101 sessions to make sure that visitors/new members were aware of ARE in general and to encourage their participating in the UU201 course (previously UU Basics).
- Continued to offer weekly Yoga sessions led by Annamieke Hermans.
- Supported off-site Board of Trustee retreat.
- Held our own off-site ARE “Workshop,” a day of team-building and goal-setting for the coming year (2010–2011).
- Worked closely with the Membership Committee to obtain frequent visitor and new membership lists.
- Communicated with frequent visitors and new members to create awareness of ARE offerings.
- Offered a total of 14 workshops plus ongoing yoga sessions.
- Created, conducted, and analyzed our Biennial ARE Survey.
- Used information from the survey to plan for courses for the upcoming church year (2011–2012).
- Continued planning of the Samstone Lecture, the inaugural event of which will be held in the fall of 2012.
- Held a Facilitator Training Workshop, an all-day Saturday event to support current and former facilitators as well as to increase our list of future facilitators.
- Continued to collect suggested donations (\$10 members, \$15 non-members) to support ARE programs.
- Enrolled as a “pilot” congregation for the 2011–2012 year in the UU Wellspring Program.

### **Goals and Future Strategies (2011–2012)**

- Continue to explore opportunities to coordinate ARE and RECCY (multi-generational).
- Develop policies for evaluating workshop applications and facilitator qualifications.
- Develop “core” of courses for each of the four threads of the ARE curricula.
- Continue to encourage people to be facilitators, especially for UUA curricula.
- Clarify facilitation process.
- Continue to reach out to new members and frequent visitors to encourage participation in ARE offerings.
- Seek still better methods of involving congregation with ARE.
- Find better methods of reaching out to the community beyond our walls when appropriate.
- Conduct an interest survey of non-attendees.
- Work with Communication Committee to make UUCWC website more user-friendly for ARE registration and ARE Workshop Application.
- Plan for inaugural Samstone Lecture to be held in Fall 2012.
- Rework portfolios as necessary for the 2011–2012 ARE Committee.
- Develop the UU Leadership Training Module through the Leadership Development sub-committee of ARE.
- Maintain and continue to create working relationships with Standing on the Side of Love, Denominational Affairs, Council for Faith in Action and other UUCWC entities, as well as with other UU Congregations, to carry out the mission of Adult RE.



- Implement the UU Wellspring Program curriculum as a “pilot” congregation during the 2011–2012 church year with the intention of continuing the program in subsequent years.

Thank you to the following individuals for their participation and input as we worked together to fulfill our mission this year: Holly Bussey, Terry Caton, Susan Colket, Heidi Dalzell, George Faulkner, MJ Hansen, and Leslie Ball. A special thank you to George as he leaves the committee to take on new responsibilities and to MJ who is also leaving the committee (but with an offer to continue to help the committee off-line as needed). Having Holly allow me to “shadow” her for the 2009–2010 church year along with the support of the entire ARE Committee and Robin Pugh, our DLRE, has made my transition to ARE Chair as smooth as possible.

*Kathy Frey, Chair*

## **BUILDING COMMITTEE**

Andrew Kidd and MJ Hansen took over as co-chairs of the Building Committee in July 2010. Our goal is to keep up with routine maintenance, while responding to congregation requests to smarten the place up and to do whatever major repairs we have budget for.

Routine Maintenance means replacing bulbs and fixing the multitude of things that fail or break. It is a continuous task, with which we had help from Jon Holcombe, Farzad Shadzik, and Mike Muccioli. Amongst other things, we were able to update all the Exit signs in the building to LED technology, which uses less power and in which the “bulbs” and batteries last much longer. Not only will this reduce our repair cost but it will also increase our chances of passing the annual fire inspection. We had much of the exterior of the building power-washed.

Smartening the building involved painting the lobby and upstairs hallway and subsequently the downstairs hallway. In both cases, we wanted the job done professionally, so we hired a contractor to do the work. He not only painted very well, but also removed the tired, discolored vinyl cove base (baseboard) and replaced it with attractive new dark gray material.

### **Major works**

- Roof: the process of getting quotes to replace the lobby, classroom, and Sanctuary roofs was in progress when we took over. We followed through on this pricing effort and contracted with a roofing company to do the work in November 2010. The job is complete, and we should not have to do more than routine maintenance for about 20 years. We do have a very small leak in the Sanctuary skylight, which we are monitoring. Also, under specific weather conditions, the ceiling tiles in the lobby get damp. We have not been able to find the cause of the latter, so plan to manage it such that we avoid the tiles getting wet and stained.
- Back door: we replaced the very sad and drafty exit door near the office. Thanks to Farzad Shadzik for his help with this.

*MJ Hansen and Andrew Kidd, Co-Chairs*

## CARING MINISTRY

**Mission:** Our mission is to provide support, caring, and outreach to our church community as well as to one another.

**Goals:** To ensure that people know we are here and wish to be of service during difficult times by providing requested and needed services and support.

**Current Members:** Co-Chairs Pris Gaver, Nancy Reyes-Svarcbergs, and Janet Hubbard; Jane Friedman, Bobbye Galloway, Bonnie Kubicka, Judy Rogers, Darleen Wheeler.

### Actions and Activities

- Cards, notes, emails, and calls to offer support
- Transportation to doctors and medical facilities
- Home and hospital visits
- Adult companionship and essential help around the house
- Emergency food shopping and provision of meals
- Doing essential errands as well as providing transportation for essential errands
- Meetings with families to plan and implement receptions following Memorial Services
- Increase awareness and services for those with emotional and mental health issues
- Facilitate connections and support for members undergoing cancer treatment

A file of church members willing to help with services and a variety of tasks was kept during the year. This has proven very useful in having enough people to maintain services during the year.

### Future Plans

1. Coordinate with Kitchen Ministry to stock the freezer for those needing meals.
2. Increase our involvement in mental health issues.
3. Reach out to the church community to expand the number of members on the committee.
4. Continue to revise and expand the file listing those members available as Caring Ministry Helpers. These individuals are not asked to attend meetings.

*Janet Hubbard, Co-Chair*

## COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

**Mission:** To serve as stewards of a strong and vibrant ministry at UUCWC, the Committee on Ministry will:

- Advocate for the wellbeing of the church's ministry with the understanding that all programs and activities are an opportunity for ministry.
- Educate the congregation about the church's vision and mission and explore how we bring the statements into the life of the church and into our lives.

- Ensure that there is regular assessment of both professional and lay ministry for purposes of continuous improvement and learning.
- Act as an agent of transformation by developing and promoting processes that focus on justice, reconciliation and the restoration of right relationships.

In the 2011 church year, COM played an active role in several church-wide initiatives that drew on COM's mission to advocate, educate and assess. One of these initiatives included communicating the results of the most recent SAGE survey to Council and members of the Board as a way of understanding where the congregation is headed and providing contrast to the prior surveys to understand where UUCWC has been and directions we've taken. These survey results provide the Council and Board a means of understanding what the congregational priorities are and should be as they plan their work for the year and future years.

Along with the Council for Faith in Action (CFA), COM was charged with shepherding the Living Our Principles (LOP) project during the 2011 church year. This project began as a result of the congregational conflict that resulted from a BSA Eagle Scout project proposed by a youth member of UUCWC at the end of the 2010 year. More detail on this project can be found in the LOP report included in this year's annual report. The LOP project kicked off with an open invitation to all church members to attend a forum on September 11, 2010. At that meeting, four task groups formed to address specific topics that arose as themes throughout the conflict. These themes included:

- Communication to BSA (locally and nationally) to express our dissatisfaction with their discriminatory practices.
- Considering our youth at UUCWC, how will our congregation support them and involve them in activities within our church and community, and what is UUCWC's message to youth who are involved with organizations whose principles are in conflict with UUCWC?
- Developing policies and procedures for projects involving organizations not directly involved with or related to UUCWC and recommendations for using facilitated meetings.
- Helping our congregation affirm and live out the principles that we affirm each week as a Welcoming Congregation, Green Sanctuary, Peace Site, on Journal Toward Wholeness and as an accessible congregation.

COM followed up on recommendations made to the Board in 2010 regarding consolidating or aligning similar committees so as to reduce the overall number of committees. Having so many committees, task forces and small group ministries in the congregation shows there is a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and commitment from so many members. It also means that each year new leaders need to be recruited and sometimes there are levels of overlap with these groups that create conflict or interference. COM recognizes that any suggestion for consolidation in itself creates a level of conflict as members' passions are often most closely linked to their involvement with committees and small group ministries. By making the process of participation with committees and groups more easily transparent, new members will have better access to understanding how to become more involved in the congregation.

COM Policies and Procedures were updated and approved in 2011. This was an ongoing process for the past three years. The updated version of the P&P takes into account changes in the church

structure as well as changes in the role and participation of COM in church business. These new P&P will be entered into the church-wide P&P registry for future reference by the whole congregation.

As a way of educating the congregation on the role and significance of COM, an article was placed in *The Crossings* newsletter that included results of interviews with prior COM chairs and how they see the role and impact of COM within the church.

As a way of providing advocacy information for UUCWC members, COM has been monitoring changes to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. While COM wants to schedule some type of educational forum for UUCWC members and friends, the committee has decided to wait until challenges to the law are addressed.

Members of COM in 2011 included Judy Rodgers, Maria Baratta, Stephanie Golski, Elliott Dunner, Andrew Conrad, and Geri Estren.

*Maria Baratta, Chair*

## COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

**Mission:** The Communications Committee is responsible for external communications and selected internal communications that advance internal and external awareness of UUCWC and its mission. We work to ensure that communications within the church are maintained and disseminated to the congregation in a timely manner and to publicize UUCWC and its news, events, and activities to the greater community.

Our primary goals during 2010–2011 were to broaden the functionality of our website, to refine our online advertising techniques, and to increase UUCWC’s involvement with social media.

### Website

Because our website is (after word of mouth) the most common way people find UUCWC, keeping the website fresh remained the Communications Committee’s top priority in 2010–11. This year, the committee implemented these improvements to the website:

- Installed a program that automatically uploads Charles’s sermon videos to the website, eliminating a once-laborious process that effectively prevented us from uploading videos
- Implemented the capability to accept donations through PayPal
- Created an online form for reporting building issues to the Building Committee
- Created an online form for children’s RE registration
- Worked with Membership to develop an online church photo directory
- Completed a weddings page online on behalf of the Growth Group
- Continued improvements to the Rentals page
- Completed revisions to text describing how we are an “accessible” church, eliminating “-isms” that have fallen out of favor

Work remains to be done to communicate more strongly that we are a Welcoming Congregation. Communications will look to the LWC leadership for guidance and implement changes.

The SAGE survey revealed that only 14% of those surveyed consult the website regularly. In 2011–12, we will make a major push to increase internal use of the website and to get church leaders to be more active in posting information to it. Continually fresh content encourages internal use, while showing external audiences that that we have an active, vibrant congregation. In 2011–12, this will be part of a larger effort to integrate our communications vehicles.

### **Online advertising**

We ran two Google Adwords campaigns and, for the first time, experimented with advertising on Facebook. We have three years' experience with Google, and we refine our efforts based on results. Our efforts with Facebook were more limited, as we sought to learn what works best.

Our takeaway is that targeted advertising campaigns are much more effective than general advertising efforts. As such, we will conduct campaigns during 2011–12 that are narrowly targeted to demographics we believe will be most receptive to our church's mission and values.

### **Social Media**

Our Facebook page has approximately 160 fans. Most of the Facebook content has been reposted from the website, which we believe is not an effective way to use Facebook as a marketing tool. While the website can be considered the "company line," Facebook allows for individual expression of why people like UUCWC or how UUism affects people's everyday lives.

To that end, in 2011–12 we will make an effort to involve the congregation more deeply with our Facebook page. That kind of personal expression allows the public to "see what we're like" beyond what we say about ourselves on the website. We'll also strengthen efforts to use other forms of social media, such as YouTube, to promote the church, its activities, and its people.

We worked with the Growth Group this year to explore alternative sites known to attract diverse populations and whether they might be an avenue for growth. Our findings were that these sites had few to no members in our catchment area, while Facebook's demographics are consistent with those of our region. Thus, strategic use of Facebook has the greatest potential for return.

### **Crossings Newsletter**

In an effort to make *Crossings* work synergistically with our website, we increased the use of links from the PDF version of the newsletter to the website. This minimizes the length of the newsletter, which is important in promoting readership, and drives traffic to the website. We also continued to "go green," paring the postal mailing list down to 16 people, most of whom do not have e-mail access or have indicated a preference to continue to receive *Crossings* on paper.

### **Media relations**

UUCWC publicizes its events, leadership, and ideals through local media as warranted. Media pickup included Michael Dowd's visit, UUCWC's participation in interfaith dialogues, and our work with HomeFront.

### **Additional accomplishments**

We continued to encourage committee chairs to keep their bulletin board content fresh, which we believe is an important marketing tactic for visitors to UUCWC. ... Communications drafted eleven policies and procedures and submitted them to the Board of Trustees for approval. ... The committee this year took over administrative responsibility for this annual report.

*Michael D. Dalzell, Chair*

## **COUNCIL FOR FAITH IN ACTION**

**Mission:** The Council for Faith in Action facilitates and supports the commitment of the Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing to be a force for justice, equity, and compassion. We seek not to be the conscience of this faith community but rather to be the medium that engages and encourages that conscience to manifest change through education, directed giving, social witness, advocacy, and direct action in our communities.

Since its inception, the Council for Faith in Action's charge has been to be an "umbrella" for all UUCWC's groups involved in social justice efforts, increase communication among these groups, and facilitate their efforts. The Council for Faith in Action (CFA) is the fiscal steward of the church's social justice funds and is responsible for the distribution of the UUCWC Sunday plate's social justice allocation.

We seek to inspire people and to enable people to create a culture of social justice within UUCWC. Through occasional Sunday Service Social Justice Speakers, we hear from our UUCWC members who are making a difference in the community through their jobs and/or volunteer activities. It is our hope that, over time, everyone will be inspired by at least one story and called to put their faith into action in a meaningful and personal way.

Living Our Principles: In the spring of 2010, the Council for Faith in Action was given a charge to facilitate the "Living Our Principles" project, to examine how we could more fully live, and put into action, our UU principles.

The events leading up to and including a special meeting, at which a congregational vote was taken regarding a proposed Eagle Scout labyrinth project, revealed vulnerabilities within our congregational life and conflict resolution/decision making processes. Four task groups were formed based on areas that were seen as needing congregational attention. The groups developed action plans and recommendations geared toward:

- Bringing about "compassionate conflict"
- Being more comfortable with addressing controversial topics, especially those involving a substantial part, or all, of the congregation
- More effectively working towards a "win-win" outcome
- Introducing UUCWC to the Boy Scouts of America at the local level and beyond and encouraging them to end their discriminatory practices.

A gathering was held on June 5 to hear about what these groups have learned, prepared and suggest for future practices in UUCWC. Details can be found in the "Living Our Principles" report.

Standing on the Side of Love at UUCWC: Standing on the Side of Love at UUCWC continues to work to “harness the power of love to respond to prejudice, oppression and violence based on identity.” Fifty-three members and friends have begun the Living the Welcoming Congregation (LWC) work by completing the two-part LWC introduction series. Thirty-nine members and friends have gone on to complete the five-part LWC Series A sessions. In June, the Introduction sessions were offered again. Over the summer of 2011, there was a book discussion group and an LWC film series offered through Adult RE. In the fall of 2011, the Series A workshop sessions will again be offered, as well as the four-part Series B sessions.

Public Policy Action Team: UUCWC works as part of several coalitions: the UU Legislative Ministry of New Jersey, the UU Pennsylvania Legislative Action Network, and the New Jersey Regional Coalition. A meeting was held in April to re-establish a “core group” of people who are interested in working on behalf of UUCWC with these faith-based coalitions. Some overlap exists with priority issues, and there are some issues that are more uniquely UU issues. Participants see this group as (1) supporting the coalitions that UUCWC is involved with, including making them more visible in the congregation and working with them when action is called for, and (2) undertaking education and outreach to UUCWC members and friends to raise awareness of issues and what can be done for more just social policies. The group plans to begin activities in the fall of 2011.

Sustainability Circle: The Sustainability Circle has decided to make a yearly donation to a social cause from the small profit made from their sale of organic products. The sale of these products in itself is a social action project through the environmental and financial help it provides rural communities in the third world, and the donation made to by the supplier to UUSC for each pound of product sold. The profit from the last fiscal year (\$283) was donated to the Community Garden and School Garden Programs of Isles of Trenton.

JTW Library: The offerings of the JTW library have been the most effective way over the past years of educating the congregation about racism and other oppressions. It is also much appreciated that congregational members recommend or give donations of books and/or videos, as that participation has significantly enhanced our library.

Social Justice Committee: Many UUCWC members and friends continue to be involved in projects sponsored by the Social Justice Committee. These include the Monday night tutoring for HomeFront youth, Loaves and Fishes, a continuous food drive, and furnishing UUCWC's room at HomeFront's Family Preservation Center in Ewing. More information can be found in the committee's report.

Food Ministry: Now that the kitchen renovations have been completed, UUCWC's Food Ministry is underway and fulfilling a major goal of having a full service kitchen to feed those in need. After much research and planning, the Kitchen Ministry's first project involves working with HomeFront to prepare about 80 evening meals on the second Thursday of the month for

individuals temporarily living in three Route 1 motels. Extra meals are also prepared and frozen for the Caring Committee. Food donations are requested to reduce expenses for the meals.

Thanks to support from 40% of the weekly plate designated for social justice efforts, the following funds have been allocated over the past church year:

- **Loaves and Fishes** - \$1,070  
Churches and social service organizations in central NJ take turns preparing and serving a hot meal and providing a bag lunch for those who are hungry. Over 800 meals are served on a typical Saturday. UUCWC, along with the Princeton congregation, prepared meals on March 25 and 26.
- **Trenton Area Soup Kitchen** - \$750
- **Morrisville Food Center** - \$750
- **Coalition for Peace Action** membership renewal - \$250
- **Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice** - \$300  
Donation to this non-partisan education and advocacy organization of religious and religiously affiliated groups working to preserve an individual's right to reproductive choice, free from government interference or coercion, and religious freedom for all Americans. UUA is a sponsoring member.
- **UU United Nations Office** ([www.uu-uno.org](http://www.uu-uno.org)) Annual Membership - \$500  
Pamela V'Combe is our UU-UNO envoy and is active in their climate initiative.
- **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mercer County** - \$250  
Thank you to Nancy Cox for submitting this request. Nancy would be happy to speak with anyone who is interested in being a mentor and making a difference in a child's life.
- **Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of New Jersey** - \$1300  
Annual dues for the 2010–2011 church year.
- **New Jersey Regional Coalition** - \$1,100  
Annual dues for the 2010–2011 church year.
- **Mazzoni Transgender Health Fair**, June 2–4 in Philadelphia - \$50  
Support a UU presence as part of an effort by UU congregations in the NY Metro and Joseph Priestley districts. This includes an ad in the program book and a UU table with literature to distribute.
- **Green Covenant: Living in Right Relationship with Earth** - \$50  
Conference support for this event sponsored by the UU Ministry for Earth and the NY Metro district.
- **Coalition for Peace Action's Annual Interfaith Service and Conference for Peace** - \$100  
This year's theme: "Global Abolition of Nuclear Weapons: An Idea Whose Time Has Come."
- **UUCWC's JTW Library** for the purchase of new materials - \$200
- **UUCWC's HomeFront Tutoring Program** operating expenses for the current church year - \$1,300
- **HomeFront Family Preservation Center** - \$800  
The Social Justice Committee purchases basic items to furnish a room, which provides a secure place for families in transition. When a family moves out of the center, they take



the furnishings and linens with them to get started in their own housing. The room is identified as a being supported by UUCWC. This represents two sets of furnishings.

- **UU Pennsylvania Legislative Advocacy Network** - \$40  
Membership for Bernice Husk and Kathy Frey to serve as UUCWC's liaisons.
- **UUCWC Food Ministry** - \$400  
Initial funding for expenses for providing up to 80 evening meals on the second Thursday of each month for HomeFront. The meals are delivered to three motels along Route 1, which serve as temporary homes for residents of Mercer County.
- **Social Justice Historical Portrait Exhibit** - \$389  
Partial funding to initial this project, which resulted from the Building the World We Dream About program. A planned permanent portrait exhibit in the Crossings Room will display images of significant social justice leaders in UUCWC's history and describe their major accomplishments.
- **Anchor House** - \$500  
On behalf of George Desser's and Ben Thornton's participation in the annual Anchor House Bike Ride for Runaways. Anchor House ([www.anchorhousenj.org](http://www.anchorhousenj.org)) was founded in 1978 to provide emergency housing, food, clothing and hope for runaway and homeless youth. The shelter provides for their immediate needs, while seeking to reunite youth with their families, strengthen family relationships and help youth decide on a constructive course of action.

We would welcome new members to the Council for Faith in Action. Please contact any CFA member, and join us in our journey.

*Lynne Quinto, Chair*

### **DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**Mission:** The responsibility of Denominational Affairs is to educate and disseminate information to the congregation regarding concerns, initiatives, and activities of the Unitarian Universalist faith as a whole. This includes information at the District (New York Metro) and National (UUA) level. Additionally it is a goal to help connect the UUCWC congregation to the larger faith.

I have completed my first year as the chair of Denominational Affairs and was pleased to have the very able assistance of Jim Sanders as a member of the committee.

Our own UUCWC website ([www.uucwc.org](http://www.uucwc.org)) as well the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) website ([www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org)) continue to be great sources for UU news and happenings within our faith. I have encouraged all congregants to routinely check both websites to stay connected to both UUCWC and our larger faith community. In addition, I have posted information from the UUA, the NY Metro District, and news of upcoming events such as workshops, meetings, and retreats on the Denominational Affairs bulletin board.

UUCWC celebrated Association Sunday on December 12. Jim Sanders, Holly Bussey, Kathy Frey, Bernice Husk, Rollie Rahn, and Lori Rahn, who attended General Assembly the previous year, led the service to share the GA happenings in Minneapolis in June 2010.

UUCWC participated in the Fall Chalice Campaign for the Unitarian Universalist Society in East Brunswick, N.J., which needed funds to help grow their congregation.

UUCWC was represented at the New York Metro District meeting (May 6–7) in Morristown N.J., by Rev. Charles Stephens, Board President Dan Tuft, Board President Elect Jerry Scheick, Jim Sanders, Holly Bussey, Kathy Frey Mary Kay Mitchell, and Jim Bicksler. The Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed was the keynote speaker.

Rev. Charles Stephens and fourteen members of UUCWC attended the June 22–26 General Assembly in Charlotte, North Carolina to help celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Karen Armstrong, author of *12 steps to a Compassionate Life*, gave the Ware Lecture. The plenary, workshops, Ware Lecture, and other events were made available for the first time on the UUA website (through live streaming) during and after the meeting.

*Jim Bicksler, Chair*

## ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

Please see a member of the Endowment Committee for more detailed information on UUCWC's endowment fund.

### Highlights of 2011

- **Fund Recovery** – full year with investments in the UUA Common Endowment Fund.
- **Legacy Gift Policy** – written and approved by the Board of Trustees.
- **Working on the creation of a Legacy Society** – to honor and affirm generosity to Unitarian Universalism and UUCWC.
- **Communications** – monthly visibility in *Crossings* Newsletter and updated brochures

### Some highlights of the past year

The Committee met quarterly. I want to thank Robin Holmes, Janet Hubbard (Recording Secretary), and Joe Schenk (Financial Secretary) for their work this year. We began the year down two members, and Tony Panzetta was appointed to fill one of the two open seats this past winter. I thank each member for their work on behalf of this congregation's present and future.

With the economic climate's continued investment challenge, the Endowment Committee presented a revised investment plan to the Board in January, 2010. In it we presented our unanimous decision to move all of our current investments (less the solar panel loan) into the UU Common Endowment Fund, which is a professionally managed group of funds with the UUA's own investment team. Our funds are well managed and invested in socially responsible funds as outlined by the Fund and managed with the values of our Unitarian Universalist movement. We

get monthly reports from the UUCEF and invitations to quarterly teleconferences to hear about how our funds are being cared for.

We were able to see growth in our investments, taking advantage of a stable and well managed UUA Common Endowment Fund. The investment goal for grant funding each year is determined by growth in the endowment in excess of 6%, so we will not be providing any grants again in the next year. While this year's single year growth is 9% above this minimum, we have determined that our Investment Plan, last adopted January 2010, did not significantly address gains coming out of an economic downturn to determine what is real dollar gains and what is capturing losses from the previous year. For this reason, the committee will be developing a distribution formula more in line with the UUA and other larger endowment funds and use a rolling average over a specified number of quarters (usually at least 12) to determine available income.

Our endowment fund brochure is available in the lobby and on our website, and the committee remains available to answer any planned giving questions. Direct gifts to the Endowment are always accepted, and we can talk to you about how you can put the Church's endowment fund in your estate plans.

We were not able to work on workshops, classes or information forums with Adult RE and the Stewardship Committee, as we had hoped. The Endowment Committee is working on creating a Legacy Society to honor and memorialize significant gifts that have been made to UUCWC over the span of the decade.

While the Endowment Fund may seem to you to be some "other worldly entity" that is either funded after your death or was always there, know that we hope to maintain and grow an Endowment that has vitality and worth – and know that our endowment is working every day in small ways to improve the quality of life in our congregation and for Unitarian Universalism.

*Jim Sanders, Chair*

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

The Finance Committee members this year included Lynne Quinto, Beverly Railsback, Jim Sanders, Jane Shafer, Connie Schofer, Ludy D'Angelo, and George Faulkner (Committee Chair).

### **2010–2011 Accomplishments**

- Supported the rental function by helping to identify a co-coordinator and tasks that could be performed by the office administrator, as well as updating of rental policies and a new policy on kitchen rentals.
- Worked with Stewardship and Communications on implementing a PayPal button on the church's web site for donations and pledge payments.
- Developed recommendations to the Board on budget modifications during the year and allocation of the 2009–2010 year-end surplus.
- Worked with the Treasurer to manage the budget to finish 2010–2011 with a surplus instead of the initially projected deficit.

- Worked with Committees and the Board to prepare the proposed budget for 2011–2012, which once again was a difficult process, since projected income levels were not sufficient to accommodate all requests. The Congregation approved a budget with a projected deficit. However, the 2010–2011 year actually ended with a surplus, which was used to eliminate the projected deficit. We now have a projected balanced budget for 2011–2012.
- Worked with the Building Committee to help educate the Board and others on short and long term expenses and funding options related to building maintenance and capital expenses.
- Updated policies on procurement and disbursement of funds.
- Redrafted the donor receipt form.

*George Faulkner, Chair*

## **FOOD MINISTRY**

**Mission:** It is the mission of the UUCWC Food Ministry to serve safe and nutritious meals to homeless or less privileged members of the general public and UUCWC members in need. This will be done on a regular basis in partnership with organizations whose mission(s) and purpose(s) are congruent with the mission and purpose of the UUCWC.

### **Goals of the Food Ministry**

As an outreach of social justice projects, the kitchen is to be used to provide meals for people in need of help in the local community and within our own church community.

- Our first project was to work with HomeFront to provide meals one day a month to families that are homeless and are being sheltered in motels along Route 1. This was started in April and we made 65 meals for the homeless and froze eight meals to be used by the Caring Committee as needed. The ministry has completed 80 meals in May and another 80 meals in June.
- The Food Ministry (FM) plans for the coming year of 2011–2012 to continue and possibly increase our service to HomeFront and to look for other areas of need in the community where the ministry could make a difference in people’s lives.
- It is very important to point out that almost all of the food being prepared has been donated by members of the church community. The Food Ministry received \$400 from the Council for Faith in Action to get started.
- The Food Ministry has done one fundraising activity, selling coffee, muffins, bagels, and hot dogs at the annual church Yard Sale. There are plans to have a Fall Harvest Dinner in November to help raise more funds to support the Food Ministry.

The Food Ministry Committee is made up of the following functions and the people currently filling those functions:

- Chairs: Jon Holcombe and Rollie Rahn
  - Coordinate operations of the Food Ministry

- Treasurer: Bonnie Ruekgauer
  - Coordinate and track all finances of the Food Ministry
- Secretary: Jackie Thomas
  - Keep records of meetings, all FM associated documents, and building use forms.
- Information Officer: Sue Smith
  - Provide information about FM to committee members, HomeFront (along with other partnering groups), UUCWC Board, Church members and the community.
- Food Collections Officers: Mike Muccioli and Jeremiah LaMontague
  - Track all food items, track stock, track donated items and dollar value, keep current inventory and determine items needed for upcoming food service.
- Purchasing: Elliott Dunner and Bernie Ruekgauer
  - In coordination with food collections officer, shop for necessary food items and deliver them to the church.
  - Jeremiah LaMontagne and Marybeth Carshaw will solicit donations from merchants.
- Liaison: Bernie Ruekgauer and Marybeth Carshaw
  - Coordination with HomeFront, SJC, KOT, and Caring Ministry

The Food Ministry staffing on food preparation day is as follows: chefs, team scheduler, assembly coordinator, food assembly team, food delivery drivers, clean-up team. In the future the Food Ministry will continue to search for more opportunities to serve the needs of the general public by increasing the number of meals that are prepared in partnership with organizations whose mission(s) and purpose(s) are congruent with the mission and purpose of the UUCWC.

*Roland Rahn*

### **GROUNDS COMMITTEE**

The Grounds Committee continues to organize church members to maintain the grounds and gardens of the church property.

Over the course of two workdays, one in the autumn and one in the early spring, a large number of volunteers built two new gardens on the church grounds. The first, the Peace Garden, is adjacent to the Crossings Room and lies above the kitchen's newly installed grease trap. This garden is home to the Peace Pole, donated by Jim Sanders and Holly Bussey, as well as a number of perennials and shrubs donated by church members. Mostly covered in mulch and weed barrier, this garden remains a blank canvas. The space above the grease trap itself is covered in weed barrier and small stones taken from the property.

The second garden, the Children's Garden, is near the playground. 30' square, fenced with deer netting, it contains an assortment of food and ornamental plants. Special thanks for extra work on this bed goes to Scott Drew, Susan Irgang, Ken McAlister, Sarah Burke, and Patrick and Noelle Kahney. This garden is intended as a place for the children to play, as well as a space for RE activities. A few classes have already taken advantage of this new feature of our church property.

The lawn-mowing volunteers continue to provide us with their stalwart and dependable work. Several new mowers have joined the ranks and have been trained by Grounds Co-Chair Colin Campbell.

This past winter had been a particular challenge with regard to snow removal. Through several storms with high snowfall totals, our new snow removal provider, Greg's Landscaping, cleared the parking lot fairly well and in a timely manner. However, the company failed to bill us until the end of February. As a result, the bill was far beyond what our budget had allotted for snow removal. Additionally, it came to light that our contract with Greg's was not worded clearly enough and that the company had overbilled us as a result. A lengthy email and phone correspondence enabled the board president to obtain a slightly lower total for services.

*Colin Campbell and Jen Rehbein, Co-Chairs*

### **GROWTH AND VITALITY TASK FORCE**

**Mission:** To energize, engage, envision, and execute growth by cultivating and nurturing its path.

UUCWC is at the mid-point of a three-year growth and development program. During the 2011 church year the UUCWC Growth and Vitality Task Force, also known as the Growth Group, participated in two weekend retreats, one in October 2010 and one hosted at UUCWC in April 2011. Several other congregations from New York, Connecticut, Maryland, and New Jersey have been journeying with UUCWC as co-participants in this program.

The purpose of each retreat is to have participants develop six-month goals for their congregations that will help achieve growth in areas identified as numeric, organic, incarnation, and maturation. In other words our congregation wants to grow in number, grow its sense of community and structure, grow, and expand its impact on the larger world, and grow in ways that nurture each individual's faith and religious imagination.

Several of the goals identified for and by UUCWC during the 2011 year have been attained. These include:

- Communicate the goals of this task force to the whole church
- Establish a defining level of activity to determine membership
- Explore electronic tools to promote UUCWC to other demographics
- Affirm that RE teaching is a personal spiritual experience
- Submit a policy and procedures template to Council
- Identify ways to acknowledge members for sharing the time, talent, and treasure with the church
- Promote and track the Living Our Principles project as it relates to our congregation's ability to respond to conflict, guide our youth, and enhance our commitment to our overall principles
- Increase the amount of the collection plate to better support our social action and social justice programs

Other goals that have been created for UUCWC and which we still strive to attain or enhance include:

- Create and promote lists of tasks to encourage new and lightly active members to participate in projects and events at UUCWC
- Develop new ways to help members increase their sense of belonging to the congregation
- Increase awareness of UUCWC to outside organizations and groups
- Engage the congregation in the strategic planning process by bringing many members from different levels of leadership and activity onto the planning taskforce
- Seek to reinforce the concept of belonging among new and old members and friends
- Increase UUCWC's visibility to outsiders who attend functions at UUCWC.

Participating members of the Growth and Vitality Task Force include Rev. Charles Stephens, DLRE Robin Pugh, Dan Tuft (board president), Holly Bussey (board vice president), Mike Dalzell (Communications Committee), Rollie Rahn (Membership Committee) and Maria Baratta (Committee on Ministry).

*Maria Baratta*

### **LIVING OUR PRINCIPLES PROJECT**

Nearly 40 people gathered in the Crossings Room on Saturday morning, September 11, to begin to fulfill a charge put forth by the congregation in the spring of 2010. The Council for Faith in Action was directed by a congregational vote to coordinate and provide leadership to make UUCWC more active in demonstrating to the larger community that we are a Welcoming Congregation; that we are inclusive; and that we are committed to deepening our collaboration with other organizations sharing a similar objective.

Following the 2010 annual meeting there was a special meeting at which a congregational vote was taken regarding a proposed Eagle Scout labyrinth project. The events leading up to the special meeting and the meeting itself revealed vulnerabilities in our congregational life and conflict resolution/decision making processes.

UU governance emphasizes that authority lies with the congregation, and therefore the members and friends of our congregation would be the ones to move our congregation ahead in living our principles. As a result, many members of UUCWC worked throughout the 2010–2011 church year to address how we manage congregational conflict within our existing institutional structure and to develop ways to reaffirm our commitment to actively expressing the principles upon which our congregational life is based.

Four task groups formed at the September 11 meeting based on the four major areas of concern that resonated at the congregational meeting. These four task groups were asked to brainstorm on their goals — looking at what they wanted to achieve and developing specific actions — and

make recommendations to the congregation in regard to their subject area. They were asked to use the 2011 church year as a beginning and endpoint for the project.

### *Communicating with local and national Boy Scout organizations*

#### Goals

- Determine messages for local Boy Scout councils and national organization
- How will the message be conveyed to each group
- Discuss with minister and board president prior to taking action

#### Achievements

- Identified local/regional Boy Scouts of America (BSA) contacts and developed a strategy and set of talking points to meet with them and communicate shared values of UUCWC and BSA as well as areas of conflict between the two organizations. Propose meeting with the different local organizations in summer/fall of 2011.
- Prepared draft letters to be signed by minister to BSA local, regional and national offices expressing UUCWC dissatisfaction with BSA discriminatory policies toward the LGBT community and those who are non-theists.
- Prepared strategy for reaching out to granting and funding organizations such as United Way to encourage them to enforce their nondiscrimination policies when funding organizations like BSA. Organizations who receive United Way funds are expected follow their non-discrimination guidelines.

### *Considering our Youth*

#### Goals

These tasks will be done in conjunction with Director of Lifespan Religious Education and the Religious Education Committee for Children and Youth.

- How do we support our youth at UUCWC?
- Involving youth in congregational activities and our community
- Message for youths involved in organizations whose principles are in conflict with UU principles and/or those of UUCWC

#### Achievements

- Hosted open meeting for adults and youth in regard to BSA, personal experiences with the organization and in search of recommendations on how UUCWC can educate youth about BSA policies, while also supporting youth at the local level.
- Learned more about religion-based badges that are sanctioned by UUA or BSA, as well as some of the alternative programs to scouting that are more inclusive.
- The RE program at UUCWC will strive to incorporate educational units that address “Religion in Life” type of awards in the Coming of Age program and also work to educate the congregation on the common principles shared by UUA and BSA.

### *Developing Policies and Procedures*

#### Goals

- Draft policies and procedures for projects involving outside entities (organizations not directly involved with or related to UUCWC)



- Work out policies and procedures for accepting gifts — financial, material, services
- Present recommendations to the Board of Trustees

#### Achievements

- Draft policies and procedures related to sponsorship of projects involving outside entities were submitted to the board for consideration in March of 2011.
- Recommendations were also submitted to the board on the use of a facilitator when special congregational meetings are called or when topics that may draw significant conflict are aired during open meetings or talk back sessions. Understanding that the process followed for such meetings can be as significant as the topics being addressed is an important point that was conveyed to the board.
- As the board already has a set of policies/procedures for accepting gifts, this initial goal was not pursued.

#### *Living Our Principles*

##### Goals

- Develop ways for our congregation to fully embrace and live the ideals of our candles of fellowship regarding our status as a congregation that is a Welcoming Congregation, a Green Sanctuary, a Peace Site, on a Journey Toward Wholeness, and striving to be accessible to all.
- What concrete steps can the UUCWC community take to better live out these principles and make them an everyday part of congregational life?
  - Consider who would have responsibility for each idea
  - How would it be put into practice
  - What resources, if any, would be required (time, talent, treasure)
- How do we communicate who we are and what we do to the external community?

#### Achievements

- Working with Worship Associates to develop a series of teaching moments within selected services throughout the year that will allow a focus on one of the principles and examples of how members make the principle part of their life.
- Working with the RE committee to teach children about what these principles mean and give them concrete examples of how they can incorporate them in their lives.
- Seeking opportunities for the congregation to take on challenging questions and learn to work through difficult discussion through a process of compassionate conflict.

The four task groups met several times over the course of the church year with representatives from the Council for Faith in Action, Committee on Ministry, and Board of Trustees. Members of each of these four task groups devoted a significant amount of time and energy to helping our church grow and learn from a difficult experience. The work they have done and continue to do is being incorporated into the already existing committee structures within the congregation.

Members and friends of the congregation can still get involved with any of these areas of interest by contacting the listed committees or members of Council for Faith in Action or Committee on Ministry to make a connection.

The Living Our Principles project is a work in progress and while the first formative year has ended, the energy and commitment of the project will continue for some time.

*Maria Baratta, Committee on Ministry  
Lynne Quinto, Council for Faith in Action*

## **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

The Membership Committee supports the mission of UUCWC by:

- Recognizing the importance of each person entering our congregation.
- Being a gentle presence, guiding newcomers, and welcoming them as they transition into our liberal religious community.
- Acknowledging and celebrating the commitment that membership implies.
- Supporting members by helping to develop connections within our caring community.
- Respecting and encouraging the development of personal spirituality, realizing that each individual's spiritual quest is different.

The Membership Committee is committed to facilitating the growth of this liberal faith community and to the care and nurturing of new members to help foster their commitment to the Church in order to retain membership. The committee does not do this alone, but in concert with the leaders of the Church and the membership at large and encourage all to be friendly and welcoming to visitors and new members.

Committee activities and goals for the past year:

- The Committee members work on making people feel comfortable on Sundays by having a responsible team of Greeters and Ushers (coordinated by Rollie Rahn and Jim Bicksler).
- We encourage the congregation to be welcoming during the coffee hour and do our best to ensure visitors are not standing alone.
- We send letters to new visitors who sign the Welcome Register. (Nancy Cox does this weekly.)
- The new visitors are put on a list for returning visitors. We have a sign-in log for them so we can track visitors' activity with us. (Bonnie Ruekgauer keeps the file up.)
- The returning visitors list is invited to join Charles at UU101 on the fourth Sunday of each month. (An email is sent to each of the returning visitors).
- Membership helps Charles with UU101 each month. (Sparky Morrison and Colin Unsworth coordinate.)
- On the first Sunday of each month, the Committee members offer information about our church and the denomination at a table during coffee hour after each service. (First Encounters, which Linda and Denis Jensen coordinate.)
- In the fall of 2010, Lori Rahn, co-chair, and Bonnie Ruekgauer assisted in facilitating UU 201 (formerly known as UU Basics) with Adult RE. This is a five week course to

introduce those considering membership or new members to Unitarian Universalism and UUCWC. Rev. Stephens, Robin Pugh, and leaders of the Congregation also participate.

- Membership provides information in the form of brochures from the UUA dealing with a variety of issues that offer the UU views on them, (e.g., Interfaith Marriage, Jesus, The Bible, God and Gay & Lesbian issues to name a few), which Andrew Conrad has overseen.
- There is a formal welcome and recognition of new members twice a year at a service and luncheon hosted by Charles and Alison and the Membership Committee at the Stephens' home.
- We follow up on new members at three months, six months and after the first year to determine their involvement in the church community. (Bonnie Ruekgauer does the follow up).
- We survey members who leave to gather information to help us determine how we might better meet the needs of the congregation (also done by Bonnie).
- Keep name tags up to date. (The work is done with the assistance of software of the communications committee and Rollie Rahn.)
- The committee sends membership updates (additions and deletions) to the UUA.
- Reports quarterly to the church leaders as to the additions and deletions of members.
- Packets are given to new members when they sign the Membership Book, which provides them with information on our church community. This packet was updated this year with materials from UUA and additional information about UUCWC specifically regarding the Council for Faith in. (Debs Couch makes up the packets.)
- The Membership Committee chairs have witnessed the signing of the Membership Book in Charles' absence.
- Monthly articles are submitted to *Crossings* to keep the congregation informed about new members and needs of the committee.
- Updated information on "The Path to Membership" and "Ways to get involved at UUCWC," which are available at the guest registry table and handed out at First Encounters and UU101.
- Pictures of new members and members reaching their one year anniversary are posted on the bulletin board. Colin Unsworth is working to ensure all new members have their photos taken and posted; Bonnie makes sure those with a one year anniversary are posted.
- Committee chairs have attended all church council meetings.
- The biggest accomplishment of the year was that of facilitating an "all church photo directory." Denis Jensen spearheaded this very successful project — 65% of the congregation participated, and the project continues. He did all the research and facilitated the taking of the photos in conjunction with volunteers, Colin Unsworth and Bert Wolfe. Denis, Rollie and Colin worked in concert with Mike Dalzell of the Communications Committee to ensure that proper care was taken in the publishing of this and of the privacy issues.
- Implementation of the new bylaws passed last year (May 2010) was begun, which unfortunately resulted in moving sixteen non-pledging, nonparticipating members to friend status in January previous to the annual certification to the UUA. They were all contacted three times, with opportunities to respond before their status was changed.

Rollie and Lori Rahn have complete their third year as co-chairs and will complete their second term in June of 2012 with a goal of finding a new chair or co-chairs for 2012–2014. We currently have on the committee (in addition to the co-chairs) Arlene Naber, Richard Knight, Debs Couch, Andrew Conrad (resigned in May 2011), George Desser, Bonnie Ruekgauer, Paul Tuerff, Frank Holstein, Sparky Morrison, and Colin Unsworth as full time members. Nancy Cox sends welcome notes to first-time visitors, Linda and Denis Jensen will participate on the committee the months they are in New Jersey, and Jim Bicksler assists with Usher and Greeter scheduling.

As of this writing, our membership number is 267 and we have had as many as 270. There have been 23 new members since June 2010. We lose members for many reasons: moves, deaths, too theist, not spiritual enough, and many more. As we continue to engage our new bylaws, our membership will definitely have temporary declines; however, our goal remains strong to promote the growth and maintain the membership of this congregation.

*Lori and Rollie Rahn, Co-Chairs*

## **MEMORIAL GARDEN**

In this past year, we looked into our current and future needs of the Memorial Garden Committee. It became apparent that we needed to review our mission for the church. Many documents that were developed in the past needed to be reviewed and updated. Memorial services at the garden were limited this year due to the placement of one set of ashes. Somewhat a quiet year, but with a new sense of challenges being presented for action.

1. This year we reserved sites in the garden (4) for future use by church members. This is a new idea to us, but does meet the needs of many individuals.
2. Workdays continue to be needed to help maintain the plantings in and around the garden.
3. The updating of the Memorial Garden Guidelines (rev 2004) was given to a team of committee members for their recommendations.
4. The Memorial Garden Pamphlet and Application Form were also being reviewed for possible changes.
5. A plaque is desired for placement in the church or in the garden area.
6. There is new interest in purchasing two or three more benches to be appropriately tagged and placed on the church grounds as a memorial to former members of the church.
7. An inventory and updating of the UUCWC Memorial Trees was completed in May 2011 with the help of former member Philo Elmer. We have identified thirteen trees that were planted in memorial of former church members. Two of these trees were planted during this church year.
8. There is still an interest in replacing specific walkway pavers with pavers containing the names of those whose ashes have been placed in the garden.

9. Some thought has been given to the placement of a cedar fence along the south side of the garden to create a more enclosed feel to the garden. Much research will be needed to accomplish this task.
10. The ashes of Michael Brown were placed in the garden on June 5, 2011.

As you can see, there is much to be carried over and planned for in the coming church year.

*Bernie Ruekgauer*

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

This year we updated our Mission Statement: *It is the mission of the Committee for Religious Education of Children and Youth of UUCWC to nurture the children of our congregation in collaboration with their families, teachers, and the congregation, to help them lay the foundations for a moral and fulfilling life.*

In accordance with the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism, we will strive to instill in our children a deep understanding of, and compassion for, the great diversity of human experience, from which a lifetime of love and friendship can evolve. In the process of fulfilling this mission, we intend to spread joy, not only to our children, but their families, our staff and volunteers, and our community!

### **Membership**

Robin Pugh (DLRE), Scott Umlauf (chair), Bob Busch (secretary), Jennifer Rehbein, Leslie Ball, Georganne D'Angelo, Mike Muccioli, Sarah Burke, Nancy Logue, Barbara Schroeder-Jenson.

The Sunday Children's RE program was well attended this year: 96 children were registered from 56 families. An all-ages class was taught at 9:15am, and pre-K through 9<sup>th</sup> grade was taught at 11:00am. In addition, 33 adults and youth volunteered to teach classes, which is an excellent level of involvement. This year, for the first time, a “graduation” ceremony was held for kids moving from the nursery to pre-K.

Of particular note, the Youth Group was restarted after a year or two of inactivity. The Youth Group met every other Sunday through most of the year and was well-attended. The Youth also led a worship service in March. As always, a Bridging Ceremony was held for high school graduates.

In addition to regular classes, several Special Sundays were held in which classes were combined. Service projects were carried out during some of these classes, including making custom pillow cases for HomeFront kids with fabric paint and preparing fleece blankets for Project Linus.

Outside of regular programming, several events were held. These included:

- A Teen Night where the youth played Rock Band and socialized
- Youth Group lock-in

- Two Family Game Nights where board and card games were played
- HomeFront Holiday Craft Fair
- Christmas Pageant
- Teacher Appreciation Brunch
- Easter Egg Hunt

In addition to these programs, Boxtops for Education were collected and given to kids in the HomeFront program so that they could donate them at their schools. Adjunct activities of the committee included work with the Living Our Principles Project and the initiation of a Safe Congregation group.

All in all, the Children's RE program had an active year and continues to be a draw for families attending UUCWC.

*Scott Umlauf, Chair*

### **RENTAL OF UUCWC FACILITIES**

UUCWC derives considerable income from renting our facilities to outside organizations and individuals in need of space for meetings, trainings, and events. Because this is an income-producing activity, the Rental Coordinator comes under the umbrella of the Finance Committee. The members of the Finance Committee also serve as support for the Rental coordinator and help develop policies and procedure.

This year Mike Muccioli came on board as a co-coordinator to make sure our renters always had access to someone who could respond to their needs and concerns. Susan Irgang, Office Administrator, has also provided a lot of support by gathering the basic information when a potential renter called and helping to move the process along. This avoided having potential renters have to wait until a coordinator was available.

**The Communications Committee** has created a section of the UUCWC webpage for photos and basic information about renting those spaces.

**Rental Contract updates completed.** This spring an ad hoc rental task force, consisting of some members of the Kitchen Operations Team, Finance Committee, the rental coordinators, Treasurer, and a member attorney (Frank Holstein) updated UUCWC's two rental contracts (one for single-use rentals and one for long-term rentals) and created one for the rental of the kitchen. The update was prompted by the completion of the kitchen enhancements, making it more potentially available to renters.

In addition to the one-time renters, we have four groups who meet on a regular basis at the church.

**Concerts at the Crossings** – Scott Cullen continues to book at least eight folk concerts throughout the year (September–June). These are well attended and often new people who attend our church for the first time will tell us their first time at the church was at one the concerts.

**Hopewell Valley Chorus** - This group of 80 voices uses the sanctuary on a regular basis for some rehearsals and all of their concerts.

**The Capital Singers of Trenton** - This is an 80-voice group of professional singers who use the Sanctuary regularly for rehearsal and their concerts.

**The New Jersey Support Group** (Transgender support and education group) - Meets at the church for ten of their twelve meetings during the year.

We had several weddings and memorial services. We had several organizations and training groups who rented the church facilities because the Crossings Room and Sanctuary provide large spaces for gathering groups, and then they can break out to the classrooms for smaller group parts of their trainings.

*Jane Shafer, Rental Co-Coordinator*

### **SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

The Social Justice (SJC) committee organizes and implements social justice service projects that enable service to the larger community. In addition, we offer assistance to others to implement their own projects. We also recommend to the Council for Faith in Action (CFA) deserving organizations for support from the 40% of the Sunday collection. Our projects and donations help UUCWC to become a dynamic recognized force in our community by assisting those in need. The SJC is one of a number of social justice action groups at UUCWC, with the Green Sanctuary, Journey Toward Wholeness, and the new Food Ministry.

#### **Food Ministry Established**

The big news this year is the founding of the Food Ministry. While this group is sponsored by the Social Justice Committee, they are fully independent and have established a strong foundation for this new social justice program.

After many setbacks, the UUCWC kitchen received all of the upgrades and certifications necessary to prepare food for the public. This was accomplished due to the efforts of a few dedicated individuals, especially Bernie Ruekgauer, Mike Muccioli and Farzad Shadzik. Once the construction work was completed, the Kitchen Operations team established guidelines and procedures for the use of the kitchen. Finally, the Food Ministry was established.

The Food Ministry comes under the umbrella of the Social Justice Committee for two reasons: 1) the funds to upgrade the kitchen to commercial grade were donated with the proviso that it be used for social justice projects, and 2) The group must be sponsored by a standing UUCWC committee and the SJC seemed to be the logical choice given the mission of the kitchen.

After many brainstorming sessions, the Food Ministry found a long-term project. They have committed to provide up to 80 evening meals to the HomeFront participants in temporary

housing. As of this writing, the program is going well with plenty of volunteers providing food and labor.

### **Loaves and Fishes**

The Loaves and Fishes project is the largest SJC undertaking each year. This year 85 members volunteered to help in some way. Tasks ranged from making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to serving food at St. Mary's Cathedral in Trenton. Working with a small contingent from the Princeton congregation, we prepared 800 lunches for Loaves & Fishes on Friday night, and prepared and served 800 meals on Saturday at St. Mary's Cathedral in Trenton the last weekend in March.

### **HomeFront Programs**

This year twelve children benefited from the annual HomeFront Back to School Campaign. UUCWC members purchased new clothing, shoes, school supplies, and backpacks. UUCWC also collected funds for the Christmas Wishes program that ensures holiday gifts for all of our HomeFront children.

The annual Mitten Tree was again decorated with hats, scarves, and gloves for HomeFront children and their families. These programs are funded by those donating the items.

UUCWC also sponsors a room at the HomeFront Family Preservation Center. Twice a year, we provide home furnishing such as linens, towels, lamps, and other items. The family takes these items with them when they are placed in permanent housing. The Family Preservation Center provides safe haven with private family rooms. A comprehensive regimen of programs and services helps homeless families break the cycle of poverty. Susan Irgang did the shopping this year and the CFA provided the funding.

### **Morrisville Food Center**

UUCWC continued its relationship with the Morrisville Food Center. We are one of the center's largest cash donors with our annual contribution of \$1,000 from the Sunday collection. The food center, housed in the Morrisville Presbyterian Church, supplies bags of groceries to the disadvantaged in Morrisville and Trenton. In addition to our cash contribution, a contingent from UUCWC contributes time each week working at the Food Center taking on tasks that range from coordinating volunteers to loading shopping bags with food.

Many members of the congregation donated generous amounts of food to the "Don't Come to Church Empty Handed" Food Drive for the benefit of the Morrisville Food Center. Every week, Darleen Wheeler transported the bags of food left in the lobby to the food center.

Finally, a few members also participated in the Food Center's "Hike Against Hunger," donating pledged funds.

### **Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK)**

Our congregation continues to generously support TASK. Our total cash contribution to TASK was \$1000. This year we more than doubled the number of frozen turkeys donated by delivering over twenty turkeys to the TASK facility.



### **Recommended Donations**

In addition to the contributions to TASK and the Morrisville Food Center, the SJC recommended, and the CFA approved, donations to the Coalition for Peace Action, and the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. These contributions are possible through your generous contributions to the Sunday collection.

### **Social Action Committee Members**

The members of this committee are Bernie Ruekgauer, Richard Knight, Debbie West, and Juliet Marlier. We added Jean Meier as a new member this year.

We would like to express appreciation to dedicated committee members and to the many members and friends of the congregation who have supported UUCWC social justice projects.

Finally, we'd like to thank the entire congregation for voting to donate 50% of the Sunday collection to Social Justice causes during the 2011–2012 church year.

*Ronnie and Ed Dobrowolski, Co-Chairs*

## **STEWARDSHIP**

This was my second year as your Stewardship Team Chairperson. This year I recruited several very able Stewards to work with me in our continued growth of the Stewardship of UUCWC. They include Jef Buehler, Holly Bussey, George Faulkner, Kathy Frey, Mike Hanson, Kevyn Malloy, and Peter Raffle. Additional support was provided by Lynne Quinto, Pledge Steward, and Bonnie Ruekgauer. We were successful at creating a team in support of the annual canvass. Late in the church year, the committee met to begin the process of reviewing available UUA materials on year-round stewardship called FORTH – Forward Through the Ages, a program that is now available for all congregations to build their stewardship capacity and maturity over the course of several years.

We continued to provide writings on a monthly basis in the *Crossings* newsletter and on the church website presenting different aspects of stewardship in the life of a church community and to begin the conversations around annual pledge support in advance of any fund drive activity.

This year's pledge drive was set up again as a series of "cottage meetings" whereby travelling pledge stewards met with committees, affinity groups, neighborhood groups, and small group ministries over a period of six weeks in March and April of 2011. Over this time, we held visioning exercises in committee meetings, and over dinners and desserts and receptions. A large number of new members and friends have pledged for the upcoming year, and we are excited about the potential found in our continued growth. We were able to realize a 5% increase in the number of pledging households.

## **RESULTS (as of June 30, 2011) for the 2011–2012 Pledge Year**

- 37% of households increased their pledge for 2012
- 34% of households maintained their pledge at the 2011 pledge level
- 15% of households needed to lower their pledges
- 9% of households are NEW pledgers this year
- 5% of households left the area, and
- 5% of households have not submitted a pledge as of yet.

As of early reports to the board July 2011, the Treasurer reported a projected surplus for the year. This is due to a large degree to ongoing follow-up and end-of-year check-in with each pledge unit to complete their pledge commitment. THANK YOU to everyone who has completed this year's pledge.

2012 will be impacted by the work of the strategic planning group for the creation of our five-year mission along with the upcoming retirement of the Reverend Charles Stephens on June 30, 2012, after fifteen years of devoted service to our congregation.

I have agreed to serve another two-year term as your Stewardship Chair, and I look forward to continuing to grow our generous hearts through our growing awareness of Stewardship and the importance of the whole congregation in the successes of this committee and its vision for the Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing.

*Jim Sanders, Chair*

## **WORSHIP ASSOCIATES COMMITTEE**

### **Mission and vision**

It is the mission of the Worship Associate Committee of UUCWC to facilitate and create worship services that support and enhance the vision and mission of this liberal faith community and of UUism. We work with the minister or guest speaker to plan and/or conduct worship services. It is the vision of the Worship Associate Committee of UUCWC to create and support communal worship that promotes our UU principles, values, and history.

### **Members**

Stephanie Golski extended her term over the summer of 2010 and exited the committee January 2011. Our members exiting by the end of the summer 2011 are Eric Roberts and Bill Cox. Continuing member is Margaret DeAngelis. Beginning their third year in September 2011 will be Andrew Conrad, Ronnie Dobrowolski, Chris Piatek, and Nina Todor. Beginning their second year in September will be George Desser, MJ Hansen, and Ben Thornton. Kyle Roberts joined us this past spring and has given a commitment of one year (as a Youth member). Beginning as new WAs in September will be Rich DiGeorgio, Penny Gardner, and Bonnie Ruekgauer. I will finish my term as WA chairperson next summer 2012. The Rev. Charles Stephens, DLRE Robin Pugh, and DMM Caryl Tipton are regular members of the committee.

- Our WAs continue to assist in producing high quality Sunday morning services.
- We did a sound system training with the chair of that committee in July 2010.
- During our WA meetings, over the summer of 2010, we began rotating bringing our own chalices to the monthly meetings and sharing their special history.
- Our attempts at having a specially recommended Voice Coach did not work out at the end of 2009–2010, but we planned to have a voice workshop early in 2011–2012 (now scheduled with Caryl Tipton on September 10, 2011).
- Caryl Tipton did an analysis of the summer service questionnaire/feedback for Summer 2010 — overall, very positive.
- After the chair requested an on-line repository for our documents, our IT specialist WA, Eric Roberts, got us all connected to Yahoo Groups where we can access our WA documents for services (opening words and readings), calendars for scheduling, and email.
- During the fall 2010, we reminded WAs to say “Stand as you are willing OR able” when introducing hymns, acknowledging the different abilities of those in attendance.
- We inventoried WA supplies in the shelf area behind the choir room fall 2010 (candles and Christmas supplies mostly).
- We held a fall retreat at the home of one of our WAs, Margaret DeAngelis, on November 13, 2010.
- We continue to have discussion about the best approach to presenting the Candles of Fellowship and, by the end of the year, we now keep them in a straight line so everyone can see them all.
- We have begun to do the knowledge management descriptions of Christmas Eve service and decorating the sanctuary for Christmas for the Policy and Procedure Manual.
- We were able to enlist a youth member for this next year — Kyle Roberts joined in the spring 2011.
- We held an end-of-the year social at Charles and Alison’s home on June 18, 2011.
- We began preparing for Summer 2011 services in February 2011. The dates are June 19–September 4, 2011. The water service on September 11, 2011 begins the new church year.
- Two changes in summer service preparation for the summer of 2011 help take some of the burden off of the WAs. The refreshments for the after service fellowship is now brought by different congregants. Also after the WA sends the information in, the Order of Service is typed by our Office Manager from home via e-mail.
- The next year will be wonderful for WAs, but bittersweet as Charles announced in June 2011 that he will be retiring at the end of June 2012.

*Bonnie T Gilbert, Chair*